

THE
PLAYS
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE,
ACCURATELY PRINTED FROM
THE TEXT OF MR. STEEVEN'S
LAST EDITION,
WITH
A SELECTION
OF
THE MOST IMPORTANT NOTES.

VOLUME XVII.

CONTAINING:
HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR BILLY JONES.
1826.

H A M L E T.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Claudius, *King of Denmark.*

Hamlet, *son to the former, and nephew to the present, King.*

Polonius, *Lord Chamberlain.*

Horatio, *friend to Hamlet.*

Laertes, *son to Polonius,*

Voltimand,

Cornelius,

Rosencrantz,

Guildenstern,

} *Courtiers.*

Osrick, *a courtier.*

Another courtier.

A priest.

Marcellus,

Bernardo,

} *Officers.*

Francisco, *a soldier.*

Reynaldo, *servant to Polonius.*

A Captain. An Ambassador.

Ghost of Hamlet's father.

Fortinbras, *Prince of Norway.*

Gertrude, *Queen of Denmark, and mother of Hamlet.*

Ophelia, *daughter of Polonius.*

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Players, Gravediggers; Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.

SCENE, Elsinore.

H A M L E T,
PRINCE OF DENMARK,

ACT I. SCENE I.

Elsinore. *A Platform before the Castle.*

FRANCISCO *on his post. Enter to him*

BERNARDO.

Ber. Who's there?

Fran. Nay, answer me: stand and unfold
Yourself.

Ber. Long live the King!

Fran. Bernardo?

Ber. He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your
hour.

Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed,
Francisco.

Fran. For this relief, much thanks: 'tis bitter
cold,

And I am sick at heart.

Ber. Have you had quiet guard?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Ber. Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Fran. I think, I hear them. — Stand, ho!
Who is there?

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good night.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier:
Who hath reliev'd you?

Fran. Bernardo hath my place.
Give you good night. [Exit FRANCISCO.

Mar. Holla! Bernardo!

Ber. Say,
What, is Horatio there?

Hor. A piece of him.

Ber. Welcome, Horatio: welcome, good Mar-
cellus.

Hor. What, has this thing appear'd again to-
night?

Ber. I have seen nothing.

Mar. Horatio says, 'tis but our fantasy;
And will not let belief take hold of him,
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us;
Therefore I have entreated him along,
With us to watch the minutes of this night;
That, if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes, and speak to it.

Hor. Tush! tush! 'twill not appear.

Ber. Sit down awhile;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,

What we two nights have seen.

Hor. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Ber. Last night of all,
When yon same star, that's westward from the pole,
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus, and myself,
The bell then beating one, ——

Mar. Peace, break thee off; look, where it
comes again!

Enter GHOST.

Ber. In the same figure, like the King that's
dead.

Mar. Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.

Ber. Looks it not like the King? mark it,
Horatio.

Hor. Most like: — it harrows me with fear,
and wonder.

Ber. It would be spoke to.

Mar. Speak to it, Horatio.

Hor. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of
night,

Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the Majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee,
speak.

Mar. It is offended.

Ber. See! it stalks away.

Hor. Stay; speak; speak I charge thee, speak.
[*Exit Ghost.*

Mar. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Ber. How now, Horatio? you tremble, and
look pale:

Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you of it?

Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe,
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the King?

Hor. As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armour he had on;
When he the ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
He smote the fledged Polack on the ice.
'Tis strange.

Mar. Thus, twice before, and jump at this
dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work, I
know not;
But, in the gross and scope of mine opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he
that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land;
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the sunday from the week:
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day;
Who is't, that can inform me?

Hor. That can I;
At least the whisper goes so. Our last King,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
Dar'd to the combat; in which, our valiant Hamlet
(For so this side of our known world esteem'd him,)

Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd com-
pact,

Well ratified by law, and heraldry,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands;
Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror:
Against the which, a moiety competent
Was gaged by our King; which had return'd
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same co-

mart,

And carriage of the article design'd,
His fell to Hamlet: Now, Sir, young Fortinbras,
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there,
Shark'd up a list of landless resolute,
For food and diet, to some enterprize
That hath a stomach in't: which is no other
(As it doth well appear unto our state,)
But to recover of us, by strong hand,
And terms compulsatory, those foresaid lands
So by his father lost: And this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations;
The source of this our watch; and the chief head
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

[*Ber.* I think, it be no other, but even so:
Well may it sort, that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch; so like the King
That was, and is, the question of these wars.

Hor. A mote it is, to trouble the mind's eye,
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

.
As, stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star,

Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
 And even the like precurse of fierce events, —
 As harbingers preceding still the fates,
 And prologue to the omen coming on, —
 Have heaven and earth together démonstrated
 Unto our climatures and countrymen. —]

Re-enter Ghost.

But, soft; behold! lo, where it comes again!
 I'll cross it, though it blast me. — Stay, illusion!
 If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
 Speak to me:
 If there be any good thing to be done,
 That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,
 Speak to me:
 If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
 Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,
 O, speak!
 Or, if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
 Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
 For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
 [*Cock crows.*
 Speak of it: — stay, and speak. — Stop it, Mar-
 cellus.

Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partizan?

Hor. Do, if it will not stand.

Ber. 'Tis here!

Hor. 'Tis here!

Mar. 'Tis gone!

[*Exit Ghost.*

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
 To offer it the show of violence;
 For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
 And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Ber. It was about to speak when the cock crew.

Hor. And then it started, like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the God of day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine: and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock;
Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Hor. So have I heard, and do in part be-
lieve it.

But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill:
Break we our watch up; and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit dumb to us, will speak to him:
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

Mar. Let's do't, I pray: and I this morning
know

Where we shall find him most convenient.

[*Exeunt.*

The same. A Room of State in the same.

Enter the King, Queen, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants.

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death

The memory be green; and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe;
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature,
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our Queen,
The imperial jointress of this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere, with a defeated joy, —
With one auspicious, and one dropping eye;
With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,

In equal scale weighing delight and dole —,
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along: — For all, our thanks.

Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras, —

Holding a weak supposal of our worth;
Or thinking, by our late dear brother's death,
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleagu'd with this dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bands of law,
To our most valiant brother. — So much for him.

Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting.
Thus much the business is: We have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras, —
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose, — to suppress
His further gait herein; in that the levies,
The lists, and full proportions, are all made
Out of his subject: — and we here despatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the King, more than the scope
Of these dilated articles allow.

Farewell; and let your haste commend your duty.

Cor. Vol. In that, and all things, will we show
our duty.

King. We doubt it nothing; heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
You told us of some suit; What is't, Laertes?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose your voice: What would'st thou beg,
Laertes,

That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What would'st thou have, Laertes?

Laer. My dread Lord,
Your leave and favour to return to France;
From whence though willingly I came to Den-
mark,

To show my duty in your coronation;
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave? What
says Polonius?

Pol. He hath, my Lord, [wrung from me my
slow leave,
By laboursome petition; and, at last,
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:]
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be
thine,
And thy best graces: spend it at thy will.

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son, ——

Ham. A little more than kin, and less than
kind. [*Aside.*

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on
you?

Ham. Not so, my Lord, I am too much i'the
sun.

Queen. Good Hamlet cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not, for ever, with thy vailed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
'Thou know'st, 'tis common; all, that live, must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

Ham. Ay, Madam, it is common.

Queen. If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?

Ham. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not
seems.

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,
That can denote me truly: These, indeed, seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:

But I have that within, which passeth show;
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your
nature, Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father:

But you must know, your father lost a father:

That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound

In filial obligation, for some term

To do obsequious sorrow: But to perséver

In obstinate condolément, is a course

Of impious stubbornness, 'tis unmanly grief:

It shows a will most incorrect to heaven;

A heart unfortified, or mind impatient;

An understanding simple and unschool'd:

For what, we know, must be, and is as common

As any the most vulgar thing to sense,

Why should we, in our peevish opposition,

Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven;

A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,

To reason most absurd; whose common theme

Is death of fathers, and who still bath cry'd,

From the first corse, till he that died to-day,

This must be so. We pray you throw to earth

This unprevailing woe; and think of us

As of a father: for let the world take note,

You are the most immediate to our throne;

And, with no less nobility of love,

Than that which dearest father bears his son,

Do I impart toward you. For your intent

In going back to school in Wittenberg.

It is most retrograde to our desire:

And, we beseech you, bend you to remain

Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,

Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son,

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers,
Hamlet;

I pray thee, stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, Madam.

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply;
Be as ourself in Denmark. — Madam, come;
This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,
No jocund health, that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell;
And the King's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt* King, Queen, Lords, &c. POLO-
NIUS, and LAERTES.

Ham. O, that this too too solid flesh would
melt,

Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank, and gross in na-
ture,

Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead! — nay, not so much, not
two:

So excellent a King; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother,
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: And yet, within a month, —
Let me not think on't; — Frailty, thy name is
woman! —

A little month; or ere those shoes were old,
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,

Like Niobe, all tears; — why she, even she, —
O heaven! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer, — marry'd with my
uncle,

My father's brother; but no more like my father,
Than I to Hercules: Within a month;
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She marry'd:—O most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to, good;
But break, my heart: for I must hold my tongue!

Enter HORATIO, BERNARDO, *and* MARCELLUS.

Hor. Hail to your Lordship!

Ham. I am glad to see you well:

Horatio, — or I do forget myself.

Hor. The same, my Lord, and your poor
servant ever.

Ham. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you.

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio? —
Marcellus?

Mar. My good Lord,——

Ham. I am very glad to see you; good even,
Sir. —

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Hor. A truant disposition, good my Lord.

Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so;
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report

gainst yourself: I know, you are no truant.
 But what is your affair in Elsinore?
 We'll teach you to drink deep, ere you depart.
Hor. My Lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Ham. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;

I think, it was to see my mother's wedding.

Hor. Indeed, my Lord, it follow'd hard upon.

Ham. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd meats

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

'Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio! —

My father, — Methinks, I see my father.

Hor. Where,

My Lord?

Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hor. I saw him once, he was a goodly King.

Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

Hor. My Lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham. Saw! who?

Hor. My Lord, the King your father.

Ham. The King my father!

Hor. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear; till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

Ham. For God's love, let me hear.

Hor. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo; on their watch,
In the dead waist and middle of the night,
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed at point, exactly, cap-à-pé,
Appears before them, and, with solemn march;
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd,
By their oppress'd and fear-surprized eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me

In

In dreadful secrecy impart they did:
And I with them, the third night, kept the watch:
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes: I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this?

Mar. My Lord, upon the platform where we
watch'd.

Ham. Did you not speak to it?

Hor. My Lord, I did;

But answer made it none: yet once, methought,
It lifted up its head, and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak:
But, even then, the morning cock crew loud;
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.

Ham. 'Tis very strange.

Hor. As I do live, my honour'd Lord, 'tis
true;

And we did think it writ down in our duty,
To let you know of it.

Ham. Indeed, indeed, Sirs, but this troubles
me.

Hold you the watch to - night?

All. We do, my Lord.

Ham. Arm'd, say you?

All. Arm'd, my Lord.

Ham. From top to toe?

All. My Lord, from head to foot.

Ham. Then saw you not

His face.

Hor. O, yes, my Lord: he wore his beaver up.

Ham. What, look'd he frowningly?

Hor. A countenance more

In sorrow than in anger.

Ham. Pale, or red?

Hor. Nay, very pale.

Ham. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

Hor. Most constantly.

Ham. I would, I had been there.

Hor. It would have much amaz'd you.

Ham. Very like,

Very like: Stay'd it long?

Hor. While one with moderate haste might tell
a hundred.

Mar. Ber. Longer, longer.

Hor. Not when I saw it.

Ham. His beard was grizzl'd? no?

Hor. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.

Ham. I will watch to - night;
Perhaps 'twill walk again.

Hor. I warrant, it will.

Ham. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape,
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to - night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue;
I will requite your loves: So, fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your Honour.

Ham. Your loves, as mine to you: Farewell.

[*Exeunt* HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: 'would, the night were
come!

Till then sit still, my soul: Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's
eyes. [Exit.

S C E N E III.

A Room in Polonius' House,

Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.

Laer. My necessities are embark'd; farewell:
And, sister, as the winds give benefit,
And convey is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that?

Laer. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his fa-
vour,

Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood;
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute;
No more.

Oph. No more but so?

Laer. Think it no more:

For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews, and bulk; but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps, he loves you now;
And now no soil, nor cautel, doth besmirch
The virtue of his will: but, you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himself is subject to his birth:
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends
The safety and the health of the whole state;
And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd

Unto the voice and yielding of that body,
Whereof he is the head: Then if he says, he loves
you,

It fits your wisdom so far to believe it,
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed; which is no further,
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs;
Or lose your heart; or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd importunity.

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister;
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.

The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon:

Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes:

The canker galls the infants of the spring,

Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd;

And in the morn and liquid dew of youth

Contagious blastments are most imminent.

Be wary then: best safety lies in fear;

Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Oph. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep
As watchman to my heart: But, good my brother,

Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own read.

Laer. O, fear me not,
I stay too long; — But here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace;

Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Pol. Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame;

The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are staid for; There, — my blessing
with you;

[*Laying his hand on LAERTES' head.*]

And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou charácter. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel: but, being in,
Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy:
For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
And they in France, of the best rank and station,
Are most select and generous, chief in that.
Neither a borrower, nor a lender be:
For loan oft loses both itself and friend;
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all, — To thine ownself be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!

Laer. Most humbly do I take my leave, my
Lord.

Pol. The time invites you; go, your servants
tend.

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well

What I have said to you.

Oph. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer. Farewell. [Exit LAERTES.

Pol. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

Oph. So please you, something touching the
lord Hamlet.

Pol. Marry, well bethought:
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bount-
eous;

If it be so, (as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution,) I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly,
As it behoves my daughter, and your honour:
What is between you; give me up the truth.

Oph. He hath, my Lord, of late made many
tenders

Of his affection to me.

Pol. Affection? puh! you speak like a green
girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

Oph. I do not know, my Lord, what I should
think.

Pol. Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a
baby;
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more
dearly;

Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Wronging it thus,) you'll tender me a fool.

Oph. My Lord, he hath importun'd me with
love,

In honourable fashion.

Pol. Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

Oph. And hath given countenance to his speech,
my Lord,

With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do
know,

When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat, — extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a making,
You must not take for fire. From this time,
Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;
Set your entreatments at a higher rate,
Than a command to parley. For lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, That he is young;
And with a larger tether may he walk,
Than may be given you: In few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows: for they are broker's
Not of that die which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,
The better to beguile. This is for all, —
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment's leisure,
As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you; come your ways.

Oph. I shall obey, my Lord. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

The Platform.

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.

Ham. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

Hor. It is a nipping and an eager air.

Ham. What hour now?

Hor. I think, it lacks of twelve.

Mar. No, it is struck.

Hor. Indeed? I heard it not; it then draws
near the season,
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance
shot off, within.*

What does this mean my Lord?

Ham. The King doth wake to-night, and takes
his rouse,

Keeps wassel, and the swaggering up-spring reels:
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

Hor. Is it a custom?

Ham. Ay, marry, is't:
But to my mind, — though I am native here,
And to the manner born, — it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach, than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel, east and west,
Makes us traduc'd, and tax'd of other nations:
They clepe us, drunkards, and with swinish phrase,
Soil our addition; and, indeed it takes
From our achievements, though perform'd at
height,

The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So, oft it chances in particular men,
That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As, in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin,)
By the o'er-growth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason;
Or by some habit, that too much o'er-leavens
The form of plausible manners; — that these men, —
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect;

Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,
Their virtues else (be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo,)
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault: The dram of base
Doth all the noble substance often dout,
To his own scandal.

Enter Ghost.

Hor. Look, my Lord, it comes!

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend
us! —

Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from
hell,

Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee; I'll call thee, Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me:
Let me not burst in ignorance! but tell,
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements! why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,
Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again! What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again, in complete steel,
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature,
So horridly to shake our disposition,
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

Mar. Look, with what courteous action

It waves you to a more removed ground:
But do not go with it.

Hor. No, by no means.

Ham. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

Hor. Do not, my Lord.

Ham. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;

And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?

It waves me forth again; — I'll follow it.

Hor. What, if it tempt you toward the flood,
my Lord,

Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,

That beetles o'er his base into the sea?

And there assume some other horrible form;

Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,

And draw you into madness? think of it:

The very place puts toys of desperation,

Without more motive, into every brain,

That looks so many fathoms to the sea,

And hears it roar beneath.

Ham. It waves me still: —

Go on, I'll follow thee.

Mar. You shall not go, my Lord.

Ham. Hold off your hands.

Hor. Be rul'd, you shall not go.

Ham. My fate cries out,

And makes each petty artery in this body

As hardy as the Némean lion's nerve. —

[*Ghost beckons.*

Still am I call'd: — unhand me, Gentlemen; —

[*Breaking from them.*

By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets
me: —

I say, away: — Go on, — I'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.*

Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.

Mar. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

Hor. Have after: — To what issue will this
come?

Mar. Something is rotten in the state of Den-
mark.

Hor. Heaven will direct it.

Mar. Nay, let's follow him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

A more remote Part of the Platform.

Re-enter Ghost and Hamlet.

Ham. Whither wilt thou lead me? speak, I'll
go no further.

Ghost. Mark me.

Ham. I will.

Ghost. My hour is almost come;
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

Ham. Alas, poor ghost!

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hear-
ing

To what I shall unfold.

Ham. Speak, I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou
shalt hear.

Ham. What?

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit;
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night;
And, for the day, confin'd to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,

With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,
(O wicked wit, and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!) won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming - virtuous Queen:
O, Hamlet, what a falling - off was there!
From me, whose love was of that dignity,
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage: and to decline
Upon a wretch, whose naturel gifts were poor
To those of mine!
But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven;
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.
But, soft! methinks, I scent the morning air;
Brief let me be:—Sleeping within mine orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of mine ears did pour
The leperous distilment; whose effect
Hold such an enmity with blood of man,
That, swift as quicksilver, it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body;
And, with a sudden vigour, it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,
Of live, of crown, of Queen, at once despatch'd:
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd:
No reckoning made, but sent to my account

With all my imperfections on my head:
 O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
 A couch for luxury and damned incest.
 But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
 The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:

Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me. [Exit.

Ham. O all you host of heaven! O earth!
 What else?

And shall I couple hell? — O fie! — Hold, hold,
 my heart;

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
 But bear me stiffly up! — Remember thee?
 Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
 In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
 Yea, from the table of my memory
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
 That youth and observation copied there;
 And thy commandment all alone shall live
 Within the book and volume of my brain,
 Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven.
 O most pernicious woman!

O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
 My tables, — meet it is, I set it down,
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
 At least, I am sure, it may be so in Denmark:
 [Writing.

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;
 It is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me.*

I have sworn't.

Hor. [*Within.*] My Lord, my Lord, ——

Mar. [*Within.*] Lord Hamlet, —

Hor. [*Within.*] Heaven secure him!

Ham. So be it!

Mar. [*Within.*] Illo, ho, ho, my Lord!

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Mar. How is't, my noble Lord?

Hor. What news, my Lord?

Ham. O, wonderful!

Hor. Good my Lord, tell it.

Ham. No;

You will reveal it.

Hor. Not I, my Lord, by heaven.

Mar. Nor I, my Lord.

Ham. How say you then; would heart of man
once think it? —

But you'll be secret, —

Hor. Mar. Ay, by heaven, my Lord.

Ham. There's ne'er a villain, dwelling in all
Denmark.

But he's an arrant knave.

Hor. There needs no ghost, my Lord, come
from the grave,

To tell us this.

Ham. Why, right; you are in the right;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit, that we shake hands, and part:
You, as your business, and desire,
Such as it is, — and, for my own poor part,
Look you, I will go pray.

Hor. These are but wild and whirling words,
my Lord.

Ham. I am sorry they offend you, heartily; yes,
Faith, heartily.

Hor. There's no offence, my Lord.

Ham. Yes, by saint Patrick, but there is, Ho-
ratio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision
here, —

It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'er-master it as you may. And now, good
friends,

As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

Hor. What is't, my Lord?
We will.

Ham. Never make known what you have seen
to-night.

Hor. Mar. My Lord, we will not.

Ham. Nay, but swear't.

Hor. In faith,
My Lord, not I.

Mar. Nor I, my Lord, in faith.

Ham. Upon my sword.

Mar. We have sworn, my Lord, already.

Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. Ha, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou
there, true-penny?

Come on, — you hear this fellow in the cellarage, —
Consent to swear.

Hor. Propose the oath, my Lord.

Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen,
Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

Ham.

Ham. *Hic & ubique?* then we'll shift our ground:—

Come hither, Gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword:
Swear by my sword,
Never to speak of this that you have heard.

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear by his sword.

Ham. Well said, old mole! can'st work i'the earth so fast?

A worthy pioneer! — Once more remove, good friends.

Hor. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,

Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come; —

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy!

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,

As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet

To put an antick disposition on, —

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

As, *Well, well, we know*; — or, *We could,*

and if we would; — or, *If we list to speak*; —

or, *There be, an if they might*; —

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

That you know aught of me: — This do you swear,

So grace and mercy at your most need help you!

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! — So, Gentlemen,

With all my love I do commend me to you:

And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
May do, to express his love and friending to you,
Good willing, shall not lack. Let us go in toge-
ther;

And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint; — O cursed spite!
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let's go together. [*Exeunt.*

A C T II. S C E N E I.

A Room in Polonius's House.

Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO.

Pol. Give him this money, and these notes,
Reynaldo.

Rey. I will, my Lord.

Pol. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Rey-
naldo,

Before you visit him, to make inquiry
Of his behaviour.

Rey. My Lord, I did intend it.

Pol. Marry, well said: very well said. Look
you, Sir,

Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;
And how, and who, what means, and where
they keep,

What company, at what expence; and finding,
By this encompassment and drift of question,
That they do know my son, come you more
nearer

Than your particular demands will touch it:
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of
him;

As thus, — *I know his father, and his friends,*

And, in part, him;— Do you mark this, Reynaldo?

Rey. Ay, very well, my Lord.

Pol. *And, in part, him;—but, you may say, —not well:*

But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild;

Addicted so and so;— and there put on him

What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank

As may dishonour him: take heed of that;

But, Sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips,

As are companions noted and most known

To youth and liberty.

Rey. As gaming, my Lord.

Pol. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,

Drabbing:— You may go so far.

Rey. My Lord, that would dishonour him.

Pol. 'Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge.

You must not put another scandal on him,

That he is open to incontinency;

That's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so quaintly,

That they may seem the taints of liberty:

The flash and out-break of a fiery mind;

A savageness in unreclaimed blood,

Of general assault.

Rey. But, my good Lord, ——

Pol. Wherefore should you do this?

Rey. Ay, my Lord,

I would know that.

Pol. Marry, Sir, here's my drift;

And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant:

You laying these slight sullies on my son,

As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i'the working,

Mark you,

Your party in converse, him you would sound,
 Having ever seen, in the prenominate crimes,
 The youth you breathe of, guilty, be assur'd,
 He closes with you in this consequence;
Good Sir, or so; or friend, or Gentleman,—
 According to the phrase, or the addition,
 Of man, and country.

Rey. Very good, my Lord.

Pol. And then, Sir, does he this, — He does—
 What was I about to say? — By the mass, I was
 about to say something: — Where did I leave?

Rey. At closes in the consequence. — *Ay, marry:*
 He closes with you thus: — *I know the gen-*
tleman;

I saw him yesterday, or t'other day,
Or then, or then; with such, or such; and,
as you say,

There was he gaming; there o'ertook in his
rouse;

There falling out at tennis: or, perchance,
I saw him enter such a house of sale,
(Videlicet, a brothel,) or so forth—

See you now;

Your bait of falsehood takes his carp of truth:

And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,

With windlances, and with assays of bias,

By indirections find directions out:

So, by my former lecture and advice,

Shall you my son; You have me, have you not?

Rey. My Lord, I have.

Pol. God be wi'you; fare you well.

Rey. Good my Lord, —

Pol. Observe his inclination in yourself.

Rey. I shall, my Lord.

Pol. And let him ply his musick.

Rey. Well, my Lord.

[*Exit.*

Enter OPHELIA.

Pol. Farewell! — How now, Ophelia? what's
the matter?

Oph. O, my Lord, my Lord, I have been so
affrighted!

Pol. With what, in the name of heaven?

Oph. My Lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, — with his doublet all unbrac'd;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle;
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport,
As if he had been loosed out of hell,
To speak of horrors, — he comes before me.

Pol. Mad for thy love?

Oph. My Lord, I do not know:
But, truly, I do fear it.

Pol. What said he?

Oph. He took me by the wrist, and held me
hard;

Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so.
At last a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down, —
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound,
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk,
And end his being: That done, he lets me go:
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o'doors he went without their helps,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

Pol. Come, go with me; I will go seek the
King,

This is the very ecstasy of love;
 Whose violent property fordoes itself,
 And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
 As oft as any passion under heaven,
 That does afflict our natures. I am sorry, —
 What, have you given him any hard words of
 late?

Oph. No, my good Lord; but, as you did
 command,
 I did repel his letters, and deny'd
 His access to me.

Pol. That hath made him mad.
 I am sorry, that with better heed, and judgement,
 I had not quoted him: I fear'd, he did but trifle,
 And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jeal-
 ousy!

It seems, it is as proper to our age
 To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
 As it is common for the younger sort
 To lack discretion. Come, go we to the King:
 This must be known; which, being kept close
 might move
 More grief to hide, than hate to utter love.
 Come. [*Exeunt*]

S C E N E II.

A Room in the Castle.

Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDEN-
 STERN, and *Attendants*.

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz, and Guil-
 denstern!

Moreover that we much did long to see you,

The need, we have to use you, did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it,
Since nor the exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was: What it should be,
More than his father's death, that thus hath put
him

So much from the understanding of himself,
I cannot dream of: I entreat you both,
That,—being of so young days brought up with
him:

And, since, so neighbour'd to his youth and
humour,

That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time: so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures; and to gather,
So much as from occasion you may glean,
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

Queen. Good Gentlemen, he hath much talk'd
of you;

And, sure I am, two men there are not living,
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
To show us so much gentry, and good will,
As to expend your time with us a while,
For the supply and profit of our hope,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a King's remembrance.

Ros. Both your Majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

Guil. But we both obey;
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz, and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz:

And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son. — Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Guil. Heavens make our presence, and our
practices,
Pleasant and helpful to him!

Queen. Ay, amen!

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,
and some Attendants.

Enter POLONIUS,

Pol. The ambassadors from Norway, my good
Lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good
news.

Pol. Have I, my Lord? Assure you, my good
Liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God, and to my gracious King:
And I do think, (or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath us'd to do) that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

Pol. Give first admittance to the ambassadors:
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring
them in

[*Exit* POLONIUS.

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen. I doubt, it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

Re-enter POLONIUS, *with* VOLTIMAND *and*
CORNELIUS.

King. Well, we shall sift him. — Welcome,
my good friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

Volt. Most fair return of greetings, and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies; which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness: Whereat griev'd, —
That so his sickness, age, and impotence,
Was falsely borne in hand, — sends out arrests
On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;
Receives rebuke from Norway; and, in fine,
Makes vow before his uncle, never more
To give the assay of arms against your Majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee;
And his commission, to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack:
With an entreaty, herein further shown,

[*Gives a paper.*

That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprize;
On such regards of safety, and allowance,
As therein are set down.

King. It likes us well;
And, at our more consider'd time, we'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.

Mean time, we thank you for your well-took labour:

Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together:
Most welcome home!

[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

Pol. This business is well ended.

My Liege, and Madam, to expostulate
What Majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night, night, and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
Therefore, — since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes, —

I will be brief: Your noble son is mad:
Mad call I it: for, to define true madness,
What is't, but to be nothing else but mad:
But let that go.

Queen. More matter, with less art.

Pol. Madam, I swear, I use no art at all:
That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true, 'tis pity;
And pity 'tis, 'tis true: a foolish figure;
But farewell it, for I will use no art.
Mad let us grant him then: and now remains;
That we find out the cause of this effect;
Or, rather say, the cause of this defect;
For this effect, defective, comes by cause:
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
Perpend.

I have a daughter; have, while she is mine;
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this: Now gather, and surmise.

— *To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the
most beautified Ophelia,*

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; *beautified* is
a vile phrase: but you shall hear. — Thus:

In her excellent white bosom, these, &c. —

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Pol. Good Madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful. —

Doubt thou, the stars are fire; [Reads.

Doubt, that the sun doth move:

Doubt truth to be a liar;

But never doubt, I love.

*O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers;
I have not art to reckon my groans: but that
I love thee best, O most best, believe it.
Adieu.*

*Thine evermore, most dear Lady, whilst
this machine is to him, Hamlet.*

*This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me:
And more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear.*

King. But how hath she
Receiv'd his love?

Pol. What do you think of me?

King. As of a man faithful and honourable.

Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might
you think,

*When I had seen this hot love on the wing,
(As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me,) what might you,
Or my dear Majesty your Queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk, or table-book;
Or given my heart a working, mute and dumb;
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;
What might you think? no, I went round to
work,*

*And my young mistress thus did I bespeak;
Lord Hamlet is a Prince out of thy sphere;*

This must not be: and then I precepts gave her,
 That she should lock herself from his resort,
 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;
 And he, repulsed, (a short tale to make,)
 Fell into a sadness; then into a fast;
 Thence to a watch; thence into a weakness;
 Thence to a lightness; and, by this declension,
 Into the madness wherein now he raves,
 And all we mourn for.

King. Do you think, 'tis this?

Queen. It may be, very likely.

Pol. Hath there been such a time, (I'd fain
 know that)

That I have positively said, '*Tis so,*
 When it prov'd otherwise?

King. Not that I know.

Pol. Take this from this, if this be otherwise:
 [*Pointing to his head and shoulder.*]

If circumstances lead me, I will find
 Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
 Within the centre.

King. How may we try it further?

Pol. You know, sometimes he walks four hours
 together,

Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does, indeed.

Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to
 him:

Be you and I behind an arras then;
 Mark the encounter: if he love her not,
 And be not from his reason fallen thereon,
 Let me be no assistant for a state,
 But keep a farm, and carters.

King. We will try it.

Enter HAMLET, reading.

Queen. But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away; I'll board him presently: — O, give me leave. —

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*]
How does my good Lord Hamlet?

Ham. Well, God-'a-mercy.

Pol. Do you know me, my Lord?

Ham. Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my Lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my Lord?

Ham. Ay, Sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man pick'd out of ten thousand.

Pol. That's very true, my Lord.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a God, kissing carrion. — Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my Lord.

Ham. Let her not walk i'the sun: conception is a blessing; but as your daughter may conceive, — friend, look to't.

Pol. How say you by that? [*Aside.*] Still harping on my daughter: — yet he knew me not at first: he said I was a fishmonger: He is far gone, far gone: and, truly, in my youth I suffer'd much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again. — What do you read, my Lord?

Ham. Words, words, words!

Pol. What is the matter, my Lord?

Ham. Between who?

Pol. I mean, the matter that you read, my Lord.

Ham. Slanders, Sir: for the satirical rogue says here, that old men have grey beards; that their faces are wrinkled: their eyes purging thick amber, and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: All which, Sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, Sir, shall be as old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

Pol. Though this be madness, yet there's method in it. [*Aside.*] Will you walk out of the air, my Lord?

Ham. Into my grave?

Pol. Indeed, that is out o'the air.—How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be deliver'd of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter. — My honourable Lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, Sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life.

Pol. Fare you well, my Lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Pol. You go to seek the lord Hamlet; there he is.

Ros. God save you, Sir! [*To POLONIUS.*

[*Exit POLONIUS.*

Guil. My honour'd Lord! —

Ros. My most dear Lord!—

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guil. Happy, in that we are not overhappy; On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros. Neither, my Lord.

Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours?

Guil. 'Faith, her privates we.

Ham. In the secret parts of fortune? O, most true; she is a strumpet. What news?

Ros. None, my Lord; but that the world's grown honest.

Ham. Then is doomsday near: But your news is not true. [Let me question more in particular: What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guil. Prison, my Lord!

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons; Denmark being one of the worst.

Ros. We think not so, my Lord.

Ham. Why, then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Ham. O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a King of infinite space; were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guil. Which dreams, indeed, are 'ambition: for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow.

Ham. Then are our beggars, bodies; and our monarchs, and outstretch'd heroes, the beggars' shadows: Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

Ros. Guil. We'll wait upon you.

Ham. No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended.] But, in the beaten way of friendship, what you at Elsinore?

Ros. To visit you, my Lord; no other occasion.

Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear, a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come; deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guil. What should we say, my Lord?

Ham. Any thing — but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know, the good King and Queen have sent for you.

Ros. To what end, my Lord?

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even

even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

Ros. What say you? [*To* GUILDENSTERN.

Ham. Nay, then I have an eye of you; [*Aside.*]
—if you love me, hold not off.

Guil. My Lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen moult no feather. I have of late, (but, wherefore, I know not,) lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises: and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a steril promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me, than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form, and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me,—nor woman neither; though, by your smiling, you seem to say so.

Ros. My Lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did you laugh then, when I said,
Man delights not me?

Ros. To think, my Lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you: we coted them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

Ham. He that plays the King, shall be wel-

come; his Majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil, and target: the lover shall not sigh gratis: the humorous man shall end his part in peace: the clown shall make those laugh, whose lungs are tickled o'the sere: and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't. — What players are they?

Ros. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

Ham. How chances it, they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

Ros. I think, their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so follow'd?

Ros. No, indeed, they are not.

[*Ham.* How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: But there is, Sir, an aiery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapp'd for't: these are now the fashion; and so berattle the common stages, (so they call them) that many, wearing rapiers, are afraid of goose quills, and dare scarce come thither.

Ham. What, are they children? Who maintains them? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players, (as it is most like, if their means are no better,) their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

Ros. 'Faith, there has been much to do on

both sides; and the nation holds it no sin, to tarre them on to controversy: there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

Ham. Is it possible?

Guil. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Ham. Do the boys carry it away?

Ros. Ay, that they do, my Lord; Hercules and his load too.]

Ham. It is not very strange: for my uncle is King of Denmark; and those, that would make months at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece, for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[*Flourish of trumpets within.*

Guil. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands. Come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb; lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father, and aunt-mother, are deceived.

Guil. In what, my dear Lord?

Ham. I am but mad north-north west: when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. Well be with you, Gentlemen!

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern; —and you too; —at each ear a hearer: that great baby, you see there, is not yet out of his swadling-clouts.

Ros. Haply, he's the second time come to them; for, they say, an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophecy, he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. — You say right, Sir: o'monday morning; 'twas then, indeed.

Pol. My Lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My Lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome —

Pol. The actors are come hither, my Lord.

Ham. Buz, buz!

Pol. Upon my honour, —

Ham. *Then came each actor on his ass, —*

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, [tragical-historical, tragic-al-comical, historical-pastoral,] scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men.

Ham. *O Jephtha, judge of Israel, — what a treasure hadst thou!*

Pol. What a treasure had he, my Lord?

Ham. Why — *One fair daughter, and no more,*

The which he loved passing well.

Pol. Still on my daughter. [Aside.

Ham. Am I not i'the right, old Jephtha?

Pol. If you call me Jephtha, my Lord, I have a daughter, that I love passing well.

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Pol. What follows then, my Lord?

Ham. Why, *As by lot, God wot*, and then, you know, *It came to pass, As most like it was*, — The first row of the pious chanson will show you more; for look, my abridgement comes.

Enter four or five Players.

You are welcome, Masters! welcome, all:— I am glad to see thee well: welcome, good friends — O, old friend! Why thy face is valanced since I saw thee last; Com'st thou to beard me in Denmark?— What? my young Lady and Mistress! By-'r-lady, your Ladyship is nearer to heaven, than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not crack'd within the ring. — Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see: We'll have a speech straight; Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

1 Play. What speech, my Lord?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once, — but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once: for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general: but it was (as I received it, and others, whose judgements, in such matters, cried in the top of mine,) an excellent play; well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said, there were no sallets in the lines, to make the matter savoury; nor no matter in the phrase, that might indite the author of affection: but call'd it, an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: If it live in your memory, begin at this line; let me see, let me see; —

The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,
— 'tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus.

*But, as we often see, against some storm,
 A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
 The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
 As hush as death: anon, the dreadful thunder
 Doth rend the region: So, after Pyrrhus' pause,
 A roused vengeance sets him new a work;
 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
 On Mars's armour, forg'd for proof eterne,
 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding
 sword*

Now falls on Priam. —

*Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you
 gods,*

*In general synod, take away her power;
 Break all the spokes and fellies from her
 wheel,*

*And bowl the round nave down the hill of
 heaven.*

As low as to the fiends!

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's, with your beard.
 — Pr'ythee, say on: — He's for a jig, or a tale
 of bawdry, or he sleeps: — say on: come to He-
 cuba.

1. *Play.* *But who, ah woe! had seen the
 mobled Queen —*

Ham. The mobled Queen?

Pol. That's good? mobled Queen is good.

1. *Play.* *Run barefoot up and down,
 threat'ning the flames*

*With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head,
 Where late the diadem stood; and, for a
 robe,*

*About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
 A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up;*

*Who this had seen, with tongue in venom
steep'd,*

*'Gainst fortune's state would treason have
pronounc'd:*

*But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's
limbs;*

*The instant burst of clamour that she made,
(Unless things mortal move them not at all,)
Would have made milch the burning eyes
of heaven,*

And passion in the gods.

Pol. Look, whether he has not turn'd his colour, and has tears in's eyes. — Pr'ythee, no more.

Ham. 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon. — Good my Lord, will you see the players well bestow'd? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstract, and brief chronicles, of the time: After your death you were better have a bad epitaph, than their ill report while you live.

Pol. My Lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Ham. Odd's bodikin, man, much better: Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Pol. Come, Sirs.

Ham. Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow. — Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the murder of Gonzago?

1. Play. Ay, my Lord.

Ham. We'll have it to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen

or sixteen lines, which I would set down, and insert in't? could you not?

1. *Play.* Ay, my Lord.

Ham. Very well. — Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [*Exeunt* POLONIUS and Players.] My good friends, [*To* ROS. and GUIL.] I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. Good, my Lord!

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. Ay, so, God be wi' you: — Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That, from her working, all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion,
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty, and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant; and amaze, indeed,
The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a King,
Upon whose property, and most dear life,
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?

Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i'the
throat,

As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?

Ha!

Why, I should take it: for it cannot be,
But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter; or, ere this,
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal: Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless vil-
lain!

Why, what an ass am I? This is most brave!
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!

Fie upon't! foh! About my brains! Humph! I
have heard,

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions:
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father,
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent him to the quick; if he do blench,
I know my course. The spirit, that I have seen,
May be a devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea and, perhaps,
Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,
(As he is very potent with such spirits,)
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds
More relative than this: The play's the thing,
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King. [*Exit.*]

A C T III. S C E N E I.

A Room in the Castle.

Enter King, Queen, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. And can you by no drift of conference
Get from him, why he puts on this confusion;
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Ros. He does confess, he feels himself distracted;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guil. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded;
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well?

Ros. Most like a gentleman.

Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question; but, of our demands,
Most free in his reply.

Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way: of these we told him;
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it: They are about the court;
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true:
And he beseech'd me to entreat your Majesties,
To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart; and it doth much
content me
To hear him so inclin'd.
Good Gentlemen, give him a further edge,

And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Ros. We shall, my Lord.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too.
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither;
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Assront Ophelia:

Her father, and myself (lawful espials,)
Will so bestow ourselves, that, seeing, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge;
And gather by him, as he is behav'd,
If't be the affliction of his love, or no,
That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you:
And, for your part, Ophelia, I do wish,
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness; so shall I hope, your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may.

[*Exit* QUEEN.]

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here: — Gracious, so
please you,
We will bestow ourselves: — Read on this book;
[*To* OPHELIA.]

That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness. — We are oft to blame in this, —
'Tis too much prov'd, — that, with devotion's visage,
And pious action, we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King. O, 'tis too true! how smart
A lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beauty'd with plast'ring art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it,
Than is my deed to my most painted word:

O heavy burden!

[*Aside.*]

Pol. I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my Lord.
[*Exeunt King and POLONIUS.*]

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune;
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them? — To die, — to sleep,
No more; — and, by a sleep, to say we end
The heart-ach, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, — 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die; — to sleep;
To sleep! perchance to dream; — ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: There's the respect,
That makes calamity of so long life:
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life;
But that the dread of something after death, —
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, — puzzles the will;
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprizes of great pith and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry,

And lose the name of action. — Soft you, now !
The fair Ophelia : — Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

Oph. Good my Lord,
How does your Honour for this many a day ?

Ham. I humbly thank you; well.

Oph. My Lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

Ham. No, not I;
I never gave you aught.

Oph. My honour'd Lord, you know right well,
you did;

And, with them, words of so sweet breath compos'd
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,
'Take these again; for to the noble mind,
Rich gifts wax poor, when givers prove unkind.
There, my Lord.

Ham. Ha, ha; are you honest?

Oph. My Lord?

Ham. Are you fair?

Oph. What means your Lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest, and fair, you
should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Oph. Could beauty, my Lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will
sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd,
that the force of honesty can translate beauty into
his likeness: this was some time a paradox, but
now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my Lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me: for
virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock, but we
shall relish of it: I loved you not.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery; Why would'st thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better, my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in: What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us: Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

Oph. At home, my Lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him; that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

Oph. O, help him, you sweet heavens!

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry; Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery; farewell: Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough, what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell.

Oph. Heavenly powers, restore him!

Ham. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick - name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance: Go to; I'll no more of't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

[Exit HAMLET.]

Oph. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!

The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue,
sword:

The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,
The observ'd of all observers! quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his musick vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth,
Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me!
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Re-enter King and POLONIUS.

King. Love! his affections do not that way tend;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his
soul,

O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;
And, I do doubt, the hatch, and the disclose,
Will be some danger. Which for to prevent,
I have, in quick determination,
Thus set it down: He shall with speed to England,
For the demand of our neglected tribute:
Haply, the seas, and countries different,
With variable objects, shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart:
Whereon his brains still beating, puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

Pol. It shall do well: But yet I do believe,
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love. — How now, Ophelia?
You need not tell us what lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all. — My Lord, do as you please;
But, if you hold it fit, after the play,

Let

Let his Queen mother all alone entreat him
 To show his grief; let her be round with him;
 And I'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear
 Of all their conference: If she find him not,
 To England send him; or confine him, where
 Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so:

Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II.

A Hall in the same.

Enter HAMLET, and certain Players.

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious perriwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings: who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and noise: I would have such a fellow whipp'd for o'er-doing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: Pray you, avoid it.

1. *Play.* I warrant your Honour.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'er-step not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the pur-

pose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirrour up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure. Now this, overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one, must, in your allowance, o'er-weigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players, that I have seen play, — and heard others praise, and that highly, — not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of christians, nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted, and bellow'd, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

1. *Play.* I hope, we have reform'd that indifferently with us.

Ham. O, reform it altogether. And let those, that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them: for there be of them, that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous; and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready. — [*Exeunt Players.*]

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my Lord? will the King hear this piece of work?

Pol. And the Queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste. —

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

Will you two help to hasten them?

Both. Ay, my Lord.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. What, ho; Horatio!

Enter HORATIO.

Hor. Here, sweet Lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

Hor. O, my dear Lord, —

Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter:
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue hast, but thy good spirits,
To feed, and clothe thee? Why should the poor
be flatter'd?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp;
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish her election,
She hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
A man, that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and bless'd are those
Whose blood and judgement are so well co-mingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please: Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee. — Something too much of this. —
There is a play to-night before the King;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance,
Which I have told thee of my father's death.
I pr'ythee, when thou seest that act a-foot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul

Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen;
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note:
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face;
And, after, we will both our judgements join
In censure of his seeming.

Hor. Well, my Lord:
If he steal aught, the whilst this play is playing,
And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Ham. They are coming to the play; I must
be idle:

Get you a place.

*Danish march. A flourish. Enter King, Queen,
POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDEN-
STERN, and Others.*

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Ham. Excellent, i'faith; of the camelion's dish:
I eat the air, promise-cramm'd: You cannot feed
capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Ham-
let; these words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine now. My Lord, — you
play'd once in the university, you say?

[*To POLONIUS.*

Pol. That did I, my Lord; and was accounted
a good actor.

Ham. And what did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Julius Caesar: I was kill'd
i'the Capitol; Brutus kill'd me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him, to kill so
capital a calf there. — Be the players ready?

Ros. Ay, my Lord; they stay upon your pa-
tience.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Ham. No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

Pol. O ho! do you mark that? [*To the King.*]

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[*Lying down at OPHELIA's feet.*]

Oph. No, my Lord.

Ham. I mean, my head upon your lap?

Oph. Ay, my Lord.

Ham. Do you think, I meant country matters?

Oph. I think nothing, my Lord.

Ham. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

Oph. What is, my Lord?

Ham. Nothing.

Oph. You are merry, my Lord.

Ham. Who, I?

Oph. Ay, my Lord.

Ham. O! your only jig-maker. What should a man do, but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my Lord.

Ham. So long? Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope, a great man's memory may outlive his life half a-year: But, by'r-lady, he must build churches then: or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse; whose epitaph is, *For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.*

Trumpets sound. The dumb show follows.

Enter a King and a Queen, very lovingly; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels,

and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers; she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon, comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The poisoner, with some two or three mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end, accepts his love. [Exeunt.

Oph. What means this, my Lord?

Ham. Marry, this is miching mallecho: it means mischief.

Oph. Belike, this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue.

Ham. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

Oph. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Ham. Ay, or any show that you'll show him: Be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

Oph. You are naught, you are naught; I'll mark the play.

Pro. For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.

Ham. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

Oph. 'Tis brief, my Lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter a King and a Queen.

P. King. Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart
gone round
Neptune's salt wash, and Tellus' orb'd ground;
And thirty dozen moons, with borrow'd sheen,
About the world have times twelve thirties been;
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite commatual in most sacred bands.

P. Queen. So many journeys may the sun and
moon

Make us again count o'er, ere love be done!
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer, and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my Lord, it nothing must:
For women fear too much, even as they love;
And women's fear and love hold quantity;
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;
And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so.
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

P. King. 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and
shortly too;

My operant powers their functions leave to do:
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, belov'd; and, haply, one as kind
For husband shalt thou —

P. Queen. O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast:
In second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second, but who kill'd the first.

Ham. That's wormwood.

P. Queen. The instances, that second marriage
move,
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love;

A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.

P. King. I do believe, you think what now you
speak ;

But, what we do determine, oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory ;
Of violent birth, but poor validity :
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree ;
But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis, that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt :
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose,
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy :
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament ;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye ; nor 'tis not strange,
That even our loves should with our fortunes
change ;

For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark, his favourite flies ;
The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend :
For who not needs, shall never lack a friend ;
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.
But, orderly to end where I begun, —
Our wills, and fates, do so contráry run,
That our devices still are overthrown ;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our
own :

So think thou wilt no second husband wed ;
But die thy thoughts, when thy first lord is dead.

P. Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor
heaven light!

Sport and repose lock from me, day, and night!

To desperation turn my trust and hope!

An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!

Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy,

Meet what I would have well, and it destroy!

Both here, and hence, pursue me lasting strife,

If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

Ham. If she should break it now, —

[*To* OPHELIA.

P. King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me
here a while;

My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile

The tedious day with sleep. [Sleeps.

P. Queen. Sleep rock thy brain ;

And never come mischance between us twain ! [*Exit.*

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Ham. O, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?

Ham. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest;
no offence i'the world.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. The mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is the Duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: But what of that? your Majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not: Let the gall'd jade wince, our withers are unwrung. —

Enter LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King.

Oph. You are as good as a chorus, my Lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

Oph. You are keen, my Lord, you are keen.

Ham. It would cost you a groaning, to take off my edge.

Oph. Still better, and worse.

Ham. So you mistake your husbands. — Begin, murderer; leave thy damnable faces, and begin.

Come: —

—— The croaking raven
Doth bellow for revenge.

Luc. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and
time agreeing;

Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecat's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magick and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears.]

Ham. He poisons him i'the garden for his estate.
His name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and written
in very choice Italian: You shall see anon, how
the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph. The King rises.

Ham. What! frightened with false fire!

Queen. How fares my Lord?

Pol. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light: — away!

Pol. Lights, lights, lights!

[Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.]

Ham. Why, let the stricken deep go weep,
The hart ungalled play:

For some must watch, while some must sleep;
Thus runs the world away. —

Would not this, Sir, and a forest of feathers, (if

the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me,) with two Provencial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, Sir?

Hor. Half a share.

Ham. A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
A very, very — peacock.

Hor. You might have rhymed.

Ham. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word
for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Hor. Very well, my Lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning, —

Hor. I did very well note him.

Ham. Ah, ha! — Come, some musick; come,
the recorders. —

For if the King like not the comedy,
Why then, belike, — he likes it not, perdy. —

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Come, some musick.

Guil. Good my Lord, vouchsafe me a word
with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guil. The King, Sir, —

Ham. Ay, Sir, what of him?

Guil. Is, in his retirement, marvellous distem-
per'd.

Ham. With drink, Sir?

Guil. No, my Lord, with choler.

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more
richer, to signify this to the doctor; for, for me to
put him to his purgation, would, perhaps, plunge
him into more choler.

Guil. Good my Lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, Sir:—pronounce.

Guil. The Queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guil. Nay, good my Lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon, and my return, shall be the end of my business.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my Lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: But, Sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command: or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: My mother, you say,—

Ros. Then thus she says; Your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! — But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? impart.

Ros. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

Ros. My Lord, you once did love me.

Ham. And do still, by these pickers and stealers.

Ros. Good my Lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the King himself for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, Sir, but, *While the grass grows,*
—the proverb is something musty.

Enter the Players, with Recorders.

O, the recorders: — let me see one. — To withdraw with you: — Why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guil. O, my Lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My Lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know no touch of it, my Lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent musick. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me? You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much musick, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think, I am easier to be play'd on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS.

God bless you, Sir!

Pol. My Lord, the Queen would speak with you, and presently.

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud, that's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Ham. Methinks, it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is back'd like a weasel.

Ham. Or, like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then will I come to my mother by and by. — They fool me to the top of my bent. — I will come by and by.

Pol. I will say so. [Exit POLONIUS.]

Ham. By and by is easily said. — Leave me, friends. [Exeunt ROS. GUIL. HOR. &c.]

'Tis now the very witching time of night;
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: Now could I drink hot
blood,

And do such business as the bitter day
Would quake to look on. Soft; now to my
mother. —

O, heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom:

Let me be cruel, not unnatural:

I will speak daggers to her, but use none;

My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites:

How in my words soever she be shent,

To give them seals never, my soul, consent! [Exit.]

S C E N E III.

A Room in the same.

Enter King, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. I like him not; nor stands it safe with us,

To let his madness range. Therefore, prepare you;
I your commission will forthwith despatch,
And he to England shall along with you:
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so near us, as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunes.

Guil. We will ourselves provide:
Most holy and religious fear it is,
To keep those many many bodies safe,
That live, and feed, upon your Majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound,
With all the strength and armour of the mind,
To keep itself from 'noyance; but much more
That spirit, upon whose weal depend and rest
The lives of many. The cease of majesty
Dies not alone; but, like a gulf, doth draw
What's near it, with it: it is a massy wheel,
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone
Did the King sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy
voyage;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

Ros. Guil. We will haste us.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. My Lord, he's going to his mother's closet;
Behind the arras I'll convey myself,
To hear the process; I'll warrant, she'll tax him
home:

And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
 'Tis meet, that some more audience, than a mother,
 Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
 The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my Liege:
 I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
 And tell you what I know.

King. Thanks, dear my Lord. [*Exit* POLONIUS.
 O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
 It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
 A brother's murder! — Pray can I not,
 Though inclination be as sharp as will;
 My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
 And, like a man to double business bound,
 I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
 And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
 Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
 Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens,
 To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy,
 But to confront the visage of offence?
 And what's in prayer, but this two-fold force, —
 To be forestalled, ere we come to fall,
 Or pardon'd, being down? Then I'll look up;
 My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
 Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder! —
 That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,
 My crown, mine own ambition, and my Queen.
 May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?
 In the corrupted currents of this world,
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
 And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
 Buys out the law: But 'tis not so above:
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies
 In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?

Try

Try what repentance can: What can it not?
Yet what can it, when one can not repent?
O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
O limed soul; that, struggling to be free,
Art more engag'd! Help, angels, make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees! and, heart, with strings of
steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe;
All may be well! [*Retires, and kneels.*]

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying;
And now I'll do't; — And so he goes to heaven:
And so am I reveng'd? That would be scann'd:
A villain kills my father; and, for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.

Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread;
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And, how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven?
But, in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him: And am I then reveng'd,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
No.

Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:
When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;
Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed;
At gaming, swearing; or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't:
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven;
And that his soul may be as damn'd, and black,
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays:
This physick but prolongs thy sickly days. [*Exit.*]

The King rises, and advances.

King. My words fly up, my thoughts remain
below :

Words, without thoughts, never to heaven go. [*Exit.*

S C E N E IV.

Another Room in the same.

Enter Queen and POLONIUS.

Pol. He will come straight. Look, you lay
home to him :

Tell him, his pranks have been too broad to bear
with ;

And that your grace hath screen'd and stood be-
tween

Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.

Pray you, be round with him.

Queen. I'll warrant you ;

Fear me not : — withdraw, I hear him coming.

[*POLONIUS hides himself.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now, mother ; what's the matter ?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much of-
fended.

Ham. Mother, you have my father much of-
fended.

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle
tongue.

Ham. Go, go, you question with a wicked
tongue.

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet ?

Ham. What's the matter now ?

Queen. Have you forgot me ?

Ham. No, by the rood, not so:
You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife;
And, — 'would it were not so! — you are my
mother.

Queen. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can
speak.

Ham. Come, come, and sit you down; you
shall not budge;
You go not, till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not
murder me?

Help, help, ho!

Pol. [*Behind.*] What, ho! help!

Ham. How now! a rat? [*Draws.*
Dead, for a ducat, dead.

[*HAMLET makes a pass through the arras.*

Pol. [*Behind.*] O, I am slain. [*Falls, and dies.*

Queen. O me, what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay, I know not:
Is it the King?

[*Lifts up the arras, and draws forth POLONIUS.*

Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

Ham. A bloody deed; — almost as bad, good
mother,

As kill a King, and marry with his brother.

Queen. As kill a King!

Ham. Ay, Lady, 'twas my word. —
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
[*To POLONIUS.*

I took thee for thy better; take thy fortune:
Thou find'st, to be too busy, is some danger. —
Leave wringing of your hands: Peace; sit you
down,

And let me wring your heart: for so I shall,
If it be made of penetrable stuff;

If damned custom have not braz'd it so,
That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

Queen. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag
thy tongue

In noise so rude against me?

Ham. Such an act,
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
Calls virtue, hypocrite; takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows
As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed,
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul; and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words: Heaven's face doth glow;
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

Queen. Ah me, what act,
That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?

Ham. Look here, upon this picture, and on
this;

The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow:
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury,
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination, and a form, indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man:
This was your husband. — Look you now, what
follows:

Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?

You cannot call it, love: for, at your age,
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgement; And what judge-
ment

Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you
have,

Else, could you not have motion: But, sure, that
sense

Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err;
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,
But it reserv'd some quantity of choice,
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't,
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without fight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.

O shame? where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame,
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge;
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.

Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more:
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;
And there I see such black and grained spots,
As will not leave their tinct.

Ham. Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed;
Stew'd in corruption; honeying, and making love
Over the nasty stye;——

Queen. O, speak to me no more;
These words like daggers enter in mine ears;
No more, sweet Hamlet.

Ham. A murderer, and a villain:

A slave, that is not twentieth part the tythe
Of your precedent lord: — a vice of Kings:
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule;
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket!

Queen. No more.

Enter Ghost.

Ham. A King
Of shreds and patches: —
Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards! — What would your gracious
figure?

Queen. Alas, he's mad.

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

Ghost. Do not forget: This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look! amazement on thy mother sits:
O, step between her and her fighting soul;
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works;
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham. How is it with you, Lady?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you?
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
Starts up, and stands on end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

Ham. On him! on him! — Look you, how
pale he glares!

His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable. — Do not look upon
me;

Lest, with this piteous action, you convert
My stern effects: then what I have to do
Will want true colour; tears, perchance, for blood.

Queen. To whom do you speak this?

Ham. Do you see nothing there?

Queen. Nothing at all; yet all, that is, I see.

Ham. Nor did you nothing hear?

Queen. No, nothing, but ourselves.

Ham. Why, look you there! look, how it steals
away!

My father, in his habit as he liv'd!

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!
[Exit Ghost.]

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain:
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.

Ham. Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful musick: It is not mad-
ness,

That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word; which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness, speaks:
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place;
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my vir-
tue:

For, in the fatness of these pursy times,

Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg;
Yea, curb and woo, for leave to do him good.

Queen. O Hamlet! thou hast cleft my heart in
twain.

Ham. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to my uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this;
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock, or livery,
That aptly is put on: Refrain to-night;
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence: the next more easy:
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either curb the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night!
And when you are desirous to be bless'd,
I'll blessing beg of you. — For this same lord,
[*Pointing to POLONIUS.*

I do repent; But heaven hath pleas'd it so, —
To punish me with this, and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night! —
I must be cruel, only to be kind:
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind. —
But one word more, good Lady.

Queen. What shall I do?

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
Let the bloat King tempt you again to bed;
Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you, his mouse;
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
Or padding in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
Make you to ravel all this matter out,

That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'Twere good, you let him know:
For who, that's but a Queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,
Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
No, in despite of sense, and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
Let the birds fly; and, like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep,
And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of
breath,

And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

Ham. I must to England; you know that?

Queen. Alack,
I had forgot: 'tis so concluded on.

Ham. There's letters seal'd: and my two school-
fellows, —

Whom I will trust, as I will adders fang'd, —
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery: Let it work;
For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar: and it shall go hard,
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet,
When in one line two crafts directly meet. —
This man shall set me packing.

I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room:
Mother, good night. — Indeed, this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
Come, Sir, to draw toward an end with you?
Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally; HAMLET dragging in*
POLONIUS,

A C T IV. S C E N E I.

*The same.**Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

King. There's matter in these sighs ; these profound heaves ;
 You must translate : 'tis fit we understand them :
 Where is your son ?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.—
 [*To ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, who go out.*]

Ah, my good Lord, what have I seen to-night ?

King. What, Gertrude ? How does Hamlet ?

Queen. Mad as the sea, and wind, when both contend

Which is the mightier : In his lawless fit,
 Behind the arras hearing something stir,
 Whips out his rapier, cries, *A rat ! a rat !*
 And, in this brainish apprehension, kills
 The unseen good old man.

King. O heavy deed !
 It had been so with us, had we been there :
 His liberty is full of threats to all ;
 To you yourself, to us, to every one.
 Alas ! how shall this bloody deed be answer'd ?
 It will be laid to us, whose providence
 Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of
 haunt,

This mad young man : but, so much was our love,
 We would not understand what was most fit ;
 But, like the owner of a foul disease,
 To keep it from divulging, let it feed
 Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone ?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd :

O'er whom his very madness, like some ore,
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

King. O, Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse. — Ho! Guildenstern!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:
Go, seek him out: speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[*Exeunt Ros. and Guil.*

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,
And what's untimely done: so, haply, slander, —
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,
Transports his poison'd shot, — may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air. — O, come away!
My soul is full of discord, and dismay. [*Exeunt.*

S C E N E II.

Another Room in the same.

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. ——— Safely stow'd, — [*Ros. &c. within.*
Hamlet! lord Hamlet!] But soft, — what noise?
who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Ros. What have you done, my Lord, with the dead body?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis; that we may take it thence,

And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

Ham. That I can keep your counsel, and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! — what replication should be made by the son of a King?

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my Lord?

Ham. Ay, Sir; that soaks up the King's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the King best service in the end: He keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouth'd, to be last swallow'd: When he needs what you have glean'd, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

Ros. I understand you not, my Lord.

Ham. I am glad of it: A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

Ros. My Lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the King.

Ham. The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body. The King is a thing —

Guil. A thing, my Lord?

Ham. Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after. *[Exeunt.]*

S C E N E III.

Another Room in the same.

Enter King, attended.

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the
body.

How dangerous is it, that this man goes loose?
Yet must not we put the strong law on him:
He's lov'd of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgement, but their eyes;
And, where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause: Diseases, desperate grown,
By desperate appliance are reliev'd,

Enter ROSENCRANTZ.

Or not at all. — How now? what hath befallen?

Ros. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my Lord,
We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he?

Ros. Without, my Lord; guarded, to know
your pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper? Where?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten:
a certain convocation of politick worms are e'en at
him. Your worm is your only Emperor for diet:

we fat all creatures else, to fat us; and we fat ourselves for maggots: Your fat King, and your lean beggar, is but variable service; two dishes, but to one table; that's the end.

King. Alas, alas!

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a King; and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing, but to show you how a King may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i'the other place yourself. But, indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there. [*To some Attendants.*

Ham. He will stay till you come.

[*Exeunt Attendants.*

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety, —

Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done, — must send thee
hence

With fiery quickness: Therefore, prepare thyself;
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,
The associates tend, and every thing is bent
For England.

Ham. For England?

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.

King. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

Ham. I see a cherub, that sees them. — But,
come; for England! — Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother: Father and mother is man and wife: man and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for England. [*Exit.*

King. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;
Delay it not, I'll have him hence to-night:
Away; for every thing is seal'd and done
That else leans on the affair: Pray you, make haste.

[*Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.*

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,
(As my great power thereof may give thee sense;
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us,) thou may'st not coldly set
Our sovereign process; which imports at full,
By letters conjuring to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the hedick in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me: Till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

A Plain in Denmark.

Enter FORTINBRAS, and Forces, marching.

For. Go, Captain, from me greet the Danish King;

Tell him, that, by his licence, Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promis'd march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If that his Majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye,
And let him know so.

Cap. I will do't, my Lord.

For. Go softly on.

[*Exeunt FORTINBRAS and Forces.*]

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, &c.

Ham. Good Sir, whose powers are these?

Cap. They are of Norway, Sir.

Ham. How purpos'd, Sir,

I pray you?

Cap. Against some part of Poland.

Ham. Who

Commands them, Sir?

Cap. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, Sir,
Or for some frontier?

Cap. Truly to speak, Sir, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground,
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway, or the Pole,
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

Ham. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

Cap. Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.

Ham. Two thousand souls, and twenty thousand ducats,

Will not debate the question of this straw:
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace;
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies.—I humbly thank you, Sir.

Cap. God be wi' you, Sir. [*Exit Captain.*]

Ros. Will't please you go, my Lord?

Ham. I will be with you straight, Go a little
before. [*Exeunt Ros. and GUILD.*]

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good, and market of his time,

Be

Be but to sleep, and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, he, that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before, and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event, —
A thought, which, quarter'd, hath but one part
wisdom,

And, ever, three parts coward, — I do not know
Why yet I live to say, *This thing's to do*;
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and
means,

To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me:
Witness, this army, of such mass, and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender Prince;
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
Makes mouths at the invisible event;
Exposing what is mortal, and unsure,
To all that fortune, death, and danger, dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great,
Is, not to stir without great argument;
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason, and my blood,
And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That, for a fantasy, and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds; fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough, and continent,
To hide the slain? — O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

[Exit.

Elsinore. *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter Queen and HORATIO.

Queen. — I will not speak with her.

Hor. She is importunate; indeed, distract;
Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen. What would she have?

Hor. She speaks much of her father: says, she
hears,

There's tricks i'the world; and hems, and beats
her heart?

Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move

The hearers to collection; they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts:
Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield
them,

Indeed would make one think, there might be
thought,

Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

Queen. 'Twere good, she were spoken with;
for she may strew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds:

Let her come in. *[Exit HORATIO.]*

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself, in fearing to be spilt.

Re - enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA.

Oph. Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark?

Queen. How now, Ophelia;

OPH. *How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff.
And his sandal shoon.* [Singing.

Queen. Alas, sweet Lady, what imports this song?

Oph. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

*He is dead and gone, Lady, [Sings.
He is dead and gone;
A his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.*

O, ho!

Queen. Nay, but Ophelia, —

Oph. Pray you, mark.
White his shroud as the mountain snow. [Sings.

Enter King.

Queen. Alas, look here, my Lord.

Oph. *Larded all with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did go,
With true-love showers.*

King. How do you, pretty Lady?

Oph. Well, God'ield you! They say, the owl
was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we
are, but know not what we may be. God be at
your table!

King. Conceit upon her father.

Oph. Pray, let us have no words of this; but
when they ask you, what it means, say you this:

*Good morrow, 'tis Saint Valentine's day,
All this morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine:*

*Then up he rose, and don'd his cloathes;
And dupp'd the chamber door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.*

King. Pretty Ophelia!

Oph. Indeed, without an oath, I'll make an end
on't:

*By Gis, and by Saint Charity,
Alack, and fye for shame!
Young men will do't, if they come to't;
By cock, they are to blame.*

*Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promis'd me to wed:*

[He answers.]

*So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.*

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope, all will be well. We must be
patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think,
they should lay him i'the cold ground: My brother
shall know of it, and so I thank you for your good
counsel. Come, my coach! Good night Ladies; good
night, sweet Ladies: good night, good night. [*Exit.*

King. Follow her close; give her good watch,
I pray you. [*Exit HORATIO.*

O! this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death: And now behold,
O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions! First, her father slain;
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove: The people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts, and
whispers,

For good Polonius' death; and we have done but
greenly,
In hugger-mugger to inter him: Poor Ophelia
Divided from herself, and her fair judgement;
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts.
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France:
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering-piece, in many places
Gives me superfluous death! [*A noise within.*]

Queen. Alack what noise is this?

Enter a Gentleman.

King. Attend.

Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door:
What is the matter?

Gent. Save yourself, my Lord?
The ocean overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste,
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers! The rabble call him, Lord;
And as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry, *Choose we; Laertes shall be King!*
Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds,
Laertes shall be King, Laertes King:

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they
cry!

O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs.

King. The doors are broke. [*Noise within.*]

Enter LAERTES arm'd; Danes following.

Laer. Where is this King? — Sirs, stand you
all without.

Dan. No, let's come in.

Laer. I pray you give me leave.

Dan. We will, we will.

[They retire without the door.]

Laer. I thank you: — keep the door. — O thou
vile King,

Give me my father.

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer. That drop of blood, that's calm, pro=
claims me bastard;

Cries, cuckold, to my father; brands the harlot
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow,
Of my true mother.

King. What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant like? —
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person;
There's such divinity doth hedge a King.
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will. — Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incens'd; — Let him go, Ger=
trude; —

Speak, man.

Laer. Where is my father?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled
with:

To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience, and grace to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation: To this point I stand, —
That both the worlds I give to negligence,

Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
Most throughly for my father.

King. Who shall stay you?

Laer. My will, not all the world's:
And, for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

King. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your re-
venge,
That, sweepstake, you will draw both friend and
foe,

Winner and loser?

Laer. None but his enemies.

King. Will you know them then?

Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope
my arms;

And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,
Repast them with my blood.

King. Why, now you speak
Like a good child, and a true Gentleman,
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgement 'pear,
As day does to your eye.

Danes. [*Within.*] Let her come in.

Laer. How now! what noise is that?

*Enter OPHELIA, fantastically dress'd with
straws and flowers.*

O heat, dry up my brains! tears, seven time salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!—
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
Till our scale turn the beam, O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!

O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love: and, where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

Oph. *They bore him barefac'd on the bier;
Hey no nonny, nonny hey nonny:
And in his grave rain'd many a tear;—*

Fare you well, my dove!

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade
revenge,

It could not move thus.

Oph. You must sing, *Down a-down, an you
call him a-down-a.* O, how the wheel becomes
it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's
daughter.

Laer. This nothing's more than matter.

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;
pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies,
that's for thoughts.

Laer. A document in madness; thoughts and
remembrance fitted.

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines:
—there's rue for you; and here's some for me:—
we may call it, herb of grace o'sundays:— you
may wear your rue with a difference. — There's a
daisy. — I would give you some violets; but they
wither'd all, when my father died: — 'They say,
he made a good end, —

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy, —
Sings.]

Laer. Thought and affliction, passion, hell it-
self,
She turns to favour, and to prettiness.

Oph. *And will he not come again?* [Sings.
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll;
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan;
God 'a mercy on his soul!

And of all christian souls! I pray God. God be
wi' you! [Exit OPHELIA.

Laer. Do you see this, O God?

King. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction; but, if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labour with your soul
To give it due content.

Laer. Let this be so;
His means of death, his obscure funeral, —
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,
No noble rite, nor formal ostentation, —
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call't in question.

King. So you shall;
And where the offence is, let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me. [Exeunt.

S C E N E VI.

Another Room in the same.

Enter HORATIO, and a Servant.

Hor. What are they, that would speak with me?

Serv. Sailors, Sir;

They say, they have letters for you.

Hor. Let them come in. — [*Exit Servant.*

I do not know from what part of the world

I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

1. *Sail.* God bless you, Sir.

Hor. Let him bless thee too.

1. *Sail.* He shall, Sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, Sir; it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

Hor. [*Reads.*] Horatio, when thou shalt have overlook'd this, give these fellows some means to the King; they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase: Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compell'd valour; and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant, they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me, like thieves of mercy; but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the King have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou would'st fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear, will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the

matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet. Come, I will give you way for these your letters; And do't the speedier, that you may direct me To him from whom you brought them. [Exeunt.

S C E N E VII.

Another Room in the same.

Enter KING and LAERTES.

King. Now must your conscience my acquit-
tance seal,

And you must put me in your heart for friend;
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he, which hath your noble father slain,
Pursu'd my life.

Laer. It well appears; — But tell me,
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things
else,

You mainly were stirr'd up.

King. O, for two special reasons;
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinew'd,
But yet to me they are strong. The Queen, his
mother,

Lives almost by his looks; and for myself,
(My virtue, or my plague, be it either which,)
She is so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,

Why to a publick count I might not go,
Is, the great love the general gender bear him:
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Work like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost;
A sister driven into desperate terms;
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections:—But my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that; you must
not think,
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull,
That we can let our beard be shook with danger,
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more:
I lov'd your father, and we love ourself;
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine, —
How now? what news?

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Letters, my Lord, from Hamlet:
This to your Majesty; this to the Queen.

King. From Hamlet! Who brought them?

Mess. Sailors, my Lord, they say: I saw them
not;

They were given me by Claudio, he receiv'd them
Of him that brought them.

King. Laertes you shall hear them : —
Leave us. [*Exit Messenger.*

[Reads.] *High and mighty, you shall know,
I am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow
shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes: when*

I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return. Hamlet.

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?

Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

Laer. Know you the hand?

King. 'Tis Hamlet's character. *Naked,*—

And, in a postscript here, he says, *alone:*

Can you advise me?

Laer. I am lost in it, my Lord. But let him come;

It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
Thus diddest thou.

King. If it be so, Laertes, —

As how should it be so? — how otherwise? —

Will you be rul'd by me?

Laer: Ay, my Lord;

So you will not o'er-rule me to a peace.

King. To thine own peace. If he be now re-
turn'd, —

As checking at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, — I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall:
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe;
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,
And call it, accident.

Laer. My Lord, I will be rul'd;

The rather, if you could devise it so,

That I might be the organ.

King. It falls right.

You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine: your sum of parts

Did not together pluck such envy from him,
As did that one; and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.

Laer. What part is that, my Lord?

King. A very ribband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears,
Than settled age his sables, and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness. — Two months
since,

Here was a gentleman of Normandy, —
I have seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,
And they can well on horseback: but this gallant
Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat;
And to such wond'rous doing brought his horse,
As he had been incorps'd and demi-natur'd
With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought,
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.

Laer. A Norman, was't?

King. A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life, Lamord.

King. The very same.

Laer. I know him well: he is the brooch,
indeed,

And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you:
And gave you such a masterly report,
For art and exercise in your defence,
And for your rapier most especial,
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,
If one could match you: the scrimers of their
nation,

He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you oppos'd them: Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,

That he could nothing do, but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with you.
Now, out of this, —

Laer. What out of this, my Lord?

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

Laer. Why ask you this?

King. Nor that I think, you did not love your
father;

But that I know, love is begun by time;
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick, or snuff, that will abate it;
And nothing is at a like goodness still;
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,
Dies in his own too-much: That we would do,
We should do when we would; for this *would*
changes,

And hath abatements and delays as many,
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o'the
ulcer:

Hamlet comes back; What would you undertake,
To show yourself in deed your father's son
More than in words?

Laer. To cut his throat i'the church.

King. No place, indeed, should murder sanc-
tuarize;

Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber:
Hamlet, return'd, shall know you are come home:
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
And set a double varnish on the fame

The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine, together,

And wager o'er your heads: he, being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice,
Requite him for your father.

Laer. I will do't:

And, for the purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal, that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death,
That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point
With this contagion; that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

King. Let's further think of this;
Weigh, what convenience, both of time and means,
May fit us to our shape: if this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad perform-
ance,

'Twere better not assay'd; therefore, this project
Should have a back, or second, that might hold,
If this should blast in proof. Soft; — let me
see: —

We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings, —
I ha't:

When in your motion you are hot and dry,
(As make your bouts more violent to that end,)
And that he calls for drink, I'll have preferr'd
him

A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?

Enter

Enter Queen.

How now, sweet Queen?

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow: — Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd! O, where?

Queen. There is a willow grows ascaunt the
brook,

That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
Therewith fantastick garlands did she make
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long pur-
ples,

That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call
them:

There on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
When down her weedy trophies, and herself,
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
And, mermaid-like, a while they bore her up:
Which time, she chanted snatches of old tunes;
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indu'd
Unto that element: but long it could not be,
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

Laer. Alas then, she is drown'd?

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor
Ophelia,

And therefore I forbid my tears: But yet
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,
The woman will be out. — Adieu, my Lord!
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,

But that this folly drowns it.

[*Exit.*

King. Let's follow, Gertrude:

How much I had to do to calm his rage!

Now fear I, this will give it start again;

Therefore, let's follow.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Church-yard.

Enter two Clowns, with spades, &c.

1. *Clo.* Is she to be bury'd in christian burial;
that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

2. *Clo.* I tell thee, she is; therefore, make her
grave straight: the crowner hath set on her, and
finds it christian burial.

1. *Clo.* How can that be, unless she drown'd
herself in her own defence?

2. *Clo.* Why, 'tis found so.

1. *Clo.* It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be
else. For here lies the point: If I drown myself
wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three
branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform:
Argal, she drown'd herself wittingly.

2. *Clo.* Nay, but hear you, goodman delver.

1. *Clo.* Give me leave. Here lies the water;
good: here stands the man; good: If the man go
to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he,
nill he, he goes; mark you that: but if the water
come to him, and drown him, he drowns not
himself: Argal, he, that is not guilty of his own
death, shortens not his own life.

2. *Clo.* But is this law?

1. *Clo.* Ay, marry is't; crowner's - quest law.

2. *Clo.* Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been bury'd out of christian burial.

1. *Clo.* Why, there thou say'st: And the more pity; that great folks should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even christian. Come; my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2. *Clo.* Was he a gentleman?

1. *Clo.* He was the first that ever bore arms.

2. *Clo.* Why, he had none.

1. *Clo.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the scripture? The scripture says, Adam digg'd; Could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answer'st me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

2. *Clo.* Go to.

1. *Clo.* What is he, that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2. *Clo.* The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1. *Clo.* I like thy wit well, in good faith; the gallows does well: But how does it well? it does well to those that do ill; now thou dost ill, to say, the gallows is built stronger than the church; argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again; come.

2. *Clo.* Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

1. *Clo.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

2. *Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.

1. *Clo.* To't.

2. *Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.

1. *Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it; for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating: and, when you are ask'd this question next, say, a grave-maker; the houses that he makes, last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan, and fetch me a stoup of liquor. [*Exit 2. Clown.*]

He digs, and sings.

*In youth when I did love, did love,
Methought, it was very sweet,
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove
O, methought, there was nothing meet.*

Ham. Has this fellow no feeling of his business? he sings at grave-making.

Hor. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Ham. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

a. *Clo.* *But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me into the land,
As if I had never been such.*

[*Throws up a scull.*]

Ham. That scull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: How the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

Hor. It might, my Lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier; which could say, *Good-morrow, sweet Lord! How dost thou, good Lord?* This might be my lord such-a-one, that prais'd

my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

Hor. Ay, my Lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so: and now my lady Worm's; chapless, and knock'd about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: Here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with them? mine ache to think on't.

1. Clo. *A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade, [Sings.
For — and a shrouding sheet:
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.*

[Throws up a scull.

Ham. There's another: Why may not that be the scull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quilllets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Humph! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more? ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my Lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Hor. Ay, my Lord, and of calves-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep, and calves, which seek

out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow:
— Whose grave's this, sirrah?

1. *Clo.* Mine, Sir. —

O, a pit of clay for to be made [Sings:
For such a guest is meet,

Ham. I think it be thine; indeed; for thou liest in't.

1. *Clo.* You lie out on't, Sir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't, and say it is thine: 'tis for the dead, and not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

1. *Clo.* 'Tis a quick lie, Sir; 'twill away again, from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?

1. *Clo.* For no man, Sir.

Ham. What woman then?

1. *Clo.* For none neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in't?

1. *Clo.* One, that was a woman, Sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked, that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. — How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

1. *Clo.* Of all the days i'the year, I came to't that day that our last King Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

Ham. How long's that since?

1. *Clo.* Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: It was that very day that young Hamlet

was born: he that is mad, and sent into England.

Ham. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

1. *Clo.* Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.

Ham. Why?

1. *Clo.* 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

Ham. How came he mad?

1. *Clo.* Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How strangely?

1. *Clo.* 'Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

1. *Clo.* Why, here in Denmark; I have been sexton here, man, and boy, thirty years.

Ham. How long will a man lie i'the earth ere he rot?

1. *Clo.* 'Faith, if he be not rotten before he die, (as we have many pocky corses now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in,) he will last you some eight year, or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

Ham. Why he more than another?

1. *Clo.* Why, Sir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a scull now hath lain you i'the earth three-and twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

1. *Clo.* A whoreson mad fellow's it was; Whose do you think it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

1. *Clo.* A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! he pour'd a flaggon of Rhenish on my head once.

This same scull, Sir, was Yorick's scull, the King's jester.

Ham. This?

[Takes the scull.]

1. Clo. E'en that.

Ham. Alas, poor Yorick! — I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorr'd in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips, that I have kiss'd I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chapfallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come; make her laugh at that. — Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my Lord?

Ham. Dost thou think, Alexander look'd o'this fashion i'the earth?

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? pah!

[Throws down the scull.]

Hor. E'en so, my Lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ham. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: As thus; Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam: And why of that

loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Caesar, dead, and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!
But soft! but soft! aside; — Here comes the King,

*Enter Priests, &c. in procession; the corpse of
OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following
it; King, Queen, their Trains, &c.*

The Queen, the courtiers: Who is this they follow?
And with such maimed rites! This doth betoken,
The corse, they follow, did with desperate hand
Fordo its own life. 'Twas of some estate:
Couch we a while, and mark.

[Retiring with HORATIO.]

Laer. What ceremony else?

Ham. That is Laertes,

A very noble youth: Mark.

Laer. What ceremony else?

1. *Priest.* Her obsequies have been as ar en -
larg'd

As we have warranty: Her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctify'd have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on
her:

Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

Laer. Must there no more be done?

1. *Priest.* No more be done!

We should profane the service of the dead,

To sing a *requiem*, and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

Laer. Lay her i'the earth;—
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! — I tell the, churlish priest,
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

Ham. What, the fair Ophelia!

Queen. Sweets to the sweet: Farewell!

[*Scattering flowers.*

I hop'd, thou should'st have been my Hamlet's
wife;

I thought, thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet
maid,

And not have strew'd thy grave.

Laer. O, treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Depriv'd thee of! — Hold off the earth a while,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

[*Leaps into the grave.*

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead;
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
To o'er-top old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

Ham. [*Advancing.*] What is he, whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? this is I,
Hamlet the Dane

[*Leaps into the grave.*

Laer. The devil take thy soul!

[*Grappling with him.*

Ham. Thou pray'st not well.
I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenetic and rash,
Yet have I in me something dangerous,

Which let thy wisdom fear: Hold off thy hand.

King. Pluck them asunder.

Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet!

All. Gentlemen,——

Hor. Good my Lord, be quiet.

[The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.]

Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,

Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

Queen. O my son! what theme?

Ham. I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum.— What wilt thou do for her?

King. O, he is mad, Laertes.

Queen. For love of God, forbear him.

Ham. 'Zounds, show me what thou'lt do:
Woul't weep? woul't fight? woul't fast? woul't
tear thyself?

Woul't drink up Esil? eat a crocodile?

I'll do't. — Dost thou come here to whine?

To outface me with leaping in her grave?

Be buried quick with her, and so will I:

And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw

Millions of acres on us; till our ground,

Singeing his pate against the burning zone,

Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,

I'll rant as well as thou.

Queen. This is mere madness:

And thus awhile the fit will work on him;

Anon, as patient as the female dove,

When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,

His silence will sit drooping.

Ham. Hear you, Sir;

What is the reason that you use me thus?

I lov'd you ever: But it is no matter;

I let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. [*Exit.*

King. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon
him. — [*Exit* HORATIO.

Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;
To LAERTES.

We'll put the matter to the present push —
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son. —

This grave shall have a living monument:

An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;

Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [*Exeunt.*

S C E N E II.

A Hall in the Castle.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. So much for this, Sir: now shall you
see the other; —

You do remember all the circumstance?

Hor. Remember it, my Lord!

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of
fighting,

That would not let me sleep; methought, I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,
And prais'd be rashness for it, — Let us know,
Our indiscretion sometime serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall: and that should
teach us,

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.

Hor. That is most certain.

Ham. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Grop'd I to find out them: had my desire;

Finger'd their packet; and, in fine, withdrew
To mine own room again: making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,
A royal knavery; an exact command, —
Larded with many several sorts of reasons,
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life, —
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

Hor. Is't possible?

Ham. Here's the commission; read it at more
leisure,

But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

Hor. Ay, 'beseech you.

Ham. Being thus benetted round with villanies,
Or I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play; — I sat me down;
Devis'd a new commission; wrote it fair:
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning; but, Sir, now
It did me yeoman's service: Wilt thou know
The effect of what I wrote?

Hor. Ay, good my Lord.

Ham. An earnest conjuration from the King, —
As England was his faithful tributary;
As love between them like the palm might flourish;
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
And stand a comma 'tween their amities;
And many such like as's of great charge, —
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more, or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd.

Hor. How was this seal'd?

Ham. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant;
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal:
Folded the writ up in form of the other;
Subscrib'd it; gave't the impression; plac'd it sa-
fely,

The changeling never known: Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this
employment;

They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow:
'Tis dangerous, when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

Hor. Why, what a King is this!

Ham. Does it not, think thee, stand me now
upon?

He that hath kill'd my King, and whor'd my
mother;

Popp'd in between the election and my hopes;
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage; is't not perfect conscience,
To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be
damn'd,

To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from
England,

What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short: the interim is mine;
And a man's life's no more than to say, one.
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,

That to Laertes I forgot myself;
For by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his: I'll count his favours:
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

Hor. Peace; who comes here?

Enter OSRICK.

Osr. Your Lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, Sir. — Dost know this waterfly?

Hor. No, my good Lord.

Ham. Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to know him: he hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the King's mess: 'tis a clog; but as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

Osr. Sweet Lord, if your Lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his Majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, Sir, with all diligence of spirit: your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

Osr. I thank your Lordship, 'tis very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

Osr. It is indifferent cold, my Lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet, methinks, it is very sultry and hot; or my complexion —

Osr. Exceedingly, my Lord; it is very sultry, — as 'twere, — I cannot tell how. — My Lord, his Majesty bade me signify to you, that he has laid a great wager on your head: Sir, this is the matter, —

Ham. I beseech you, remember—

[HAMLET moves him to put on his hat.

Osr. Nay, good my Lord: for my ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court, Laertes: believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society, and great showing: indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you;—though, I know, to divide him inventorially, would dizzy the arithmetick of memory; and yet but raw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article; and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirrour; and, who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

Osr. Your Lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy, Sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

Osr. Sir?

Hor. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, Sir, really.

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Osr. Of Laertes?

Hor. His purse is empty already; all his golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, Sir.

Osr. I know, you are not ignorant—

Ham. I would you did, Sir; yet, in faith if you did, it would not much approve me;—Well, Sir.

Osr.

Osr. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is —

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

Osr. I mean, Sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellow'd.

Ham. What's his weapon?

Osr. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons: but, well.

Osr. The King, Sir, hath wager'd with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has impawn'd, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so: Three of the carriages in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

Ham. What call you the carriages?

Hor. I knew, you must be edified by the margin, ere you had done.

Osr. The carriages, Sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more german to the matter, if we could carry a cannon by our sides; I would, it might be hangers till then. But, on: Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish: Why is this impawn'd, as you call it?

Osr. The King, Sir, hath lay'd, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath laid, on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your Lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

Ham. How, if I answer, no?

Osr. I mean, my Lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his Majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me: let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the King hold his purpose, I will win for him, if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame, and the odd hits.

Osr. Shall I deliver you so?

Ham. To this effect, Sir; after what flourish your nature will.

Osr. I commend my duty to your Lordship.
[Exit.

Ham. Yours, yours. — He does well, to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hor. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

Ham. He did comply with his dug, before he suck'd it. Thus has he (and many more of the same breed, that, I know, the drossy age dotes on,) only got the tune of the time, and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnow'd opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

Enter a Lord.

Lord. My Lord, his Majesty commended him to you by young Osrick, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know, if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

Ham. I am constant to my purposes, they follow the King's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine

is ready ; now , or whensoever , provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The King, and Queen, and all are coming down.

Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The Queen desires you , to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me. [*Exit Lord.*]

Hor. You will lose this wager, my Lord.

Ham. I do not think so ; since he went into France , I have been in continual practice ; I shall win at the odds. But thou would'st not think, how ill all's here about my heart : but it is no matter.

Hor. Nay , good my Lord, —

Ham. It is but foolery ; but it is such a kind of gaingiving, as would, perhaps, trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike any thing , obey it : I will forestal their repair hither , and say , you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit, we defy augury ; there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come ; if it be not to come, it will be now ; if it be not now , yet it will come : the readiness is all : since no man , of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes ? Let be.

Enter King, Queen , LAERTES, Lords, OSRICK, and Attendants with foils, &c.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[*The King puts the hand of LAERTES into that of HAMLET.*]

Ham. Give me your pardon, Sir : I have done you wrong :

But pardon it, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows, and you must needs have
heard,

How I am punish'd with a sore distraction.
What I have done,
That might your nature, honour, and exception,
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never, Hamlet:
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And, when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it then? His madness: If't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot my arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge; but in my terms of honour,
I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation,
Till by some elder masters, of known honour,
I have a voice and precedent of peace,
To keep my name ungor'd: But till that time,
I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.

Ham. I embrace it freely;
And will this brother's wager frankly play. —
Give us the foils; come on.

Laer. Come, one for me.

Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine igno-
rance

Your skill shall like a star i'the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

Laer. You mock me, Sir.

Ham. No, by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osrick. —
Cousin Hamlet,

You know the wager?

Ham. Very well, my Lord;
Your Grace hath laid the odds o'the weaker side.

King. I do not fear it; I have seen you both:—
But since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.

Laer. This is too heavy, let me see another.

Ham. This likes me well: These foils have all
a length? [*They prepare to play.*]

Osr. Ay, my good Lord.

King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that
table:—

If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;
The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
And in the cup an union shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive Kings
In Denmark's crown have worn; Give me the cups;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
Now the King drinks to Hamlet. — Come, be-
gin;—

And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

Ham. Come on, Sir.

Laer. Come, my Lord.

[*They play.*]

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Judgment.

Osr. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well,—again.

King. Stay, give me drink: Hamlet, this pearl
is thine;

Here's to thy health. — Give him the cup.

[*Trumpets sound; and cannon shot off within.*]

Ham. I'll play this bout first, set it by awhile.

Come. — Another hit; What say you? [*They play.*]

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath. —

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows:

The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Ham. Good Madam, —

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. I will, my Lord; — I pray you pardon
me.

King. It is the poison'd cup; it is too late.

[*Aside.*]

Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laer. My Lord, I'll hit him now.

King. I do not think it.

Laer. And yet it is almost against my conscience.

[*Aside.*]

Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes: You do
but dally;

I pray you, pass with your best violence;

I am afeard, you make a wanton of me.

Laer. Say you so? come on. [*They play.*]

Osr. Nothing neither way.

Laer. Have at you now.

[*LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then, in scuffling,
they change rapiers, and HAMLET
wounds LAERTES.*]

King. Part them, they are incens'd.

Ham. Nay, come again, [*The QUEEN falls.*]

Osr. Look to the Queen there, ho!

Hor. They bleed on both sides : — How is it,
my Lord ?

Osr. How is't, Laertes ?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to my own springe,
Osrick ;

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the Queen ?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink, — O my
dear Hamlet ! —

The drink, the drink ; — I am poison'd ! [*Dies.*

Ham. O villainy ! — Ho ! let the door be lock'd :
Treachery ! see it out. [*Laertes falls.*

Laer. It is here Hamlet : Hamlet, thou art
slain ;

No medicine in the world can do thee good,
In thee there is not half an hour's life ;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated, and envenom'd : the foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me ; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again : Thy mother's poison'd ;
I can no more ; — the King, the King's to blame.

Ham. The point
Envenom'd too ! — Then, venom, to thy work.
[*Stabs the KING.*

Osr. and Lords. Treason ! treason !

King. O, yet defend me, friends, I am but
hurt.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned
Dane,

Drink off this potion : — Is the union here ?

Follow my mother. [*KING dies.*

Laer. He is justly serv'd ;

It is a poison temper'd by himself. —

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet :

Mine and my father's death come not upon thee :

Nor thine on me!

[Dies.

Ham. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.

I am dead, Horatio:—Wretched Queen, adieu!—
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time, (as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest,) O, I could tell you,—
But let it be:—Horatio, I am dead;
Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

Hor. Never believe it;
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane,
Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As thou'rt a man,—
Give me the cup; let go; by heaven, I'll have
it.—

O God!—Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind
me?

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity a while,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.—

[March afar off, and shot within.

What warlike noise is this?

Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come
from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirits;
I cannot live to hear the news from England:
But I do prophecy, the election lights
On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice;
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,

Which have solicited, — The rest is silence. [*Dies.*

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart: — Good night,
sweet Prince;

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

Why does the drum come hither? [*March within.*

Enter FORTINBRAS, *the* English Ambassadors,
and Others.

Fort. Where is this sight?

Hor. What is it, you would see?

If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

Fort. This quarry cries on havoc! — O proud
death!

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many Princes, at a shot,
So bloodily hast struck?

1. Amb. The sight is dismal;

And our affairs from England come too late:

The ears are senseless, that should give us hearing,

To tell him, his commandment is fulfill'd,

That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:

Where should we have our thanks?

Hor. Not from his mouth,

Had it the ability of life to thank you;

He never gave commandment for their death.

But since, so jump upon this bloody question,

You from the Polack wars, and you from England,

Are here arriv'd; give order, that these bodies

High on a stage be placed to the view;

And let me speak, to the yet unknowing world,

How these things came about: So shall you hear

Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;

Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters;

Of deaths put on by cunning, and forc'd cause;

And, in this upshot, purposes mistook

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NOTES TO HAMLET,
PRINCE OF DENMARK.

* * * **T**he original story on which this play is built, may be found in Saxo Grammaticus the Danish historian. From thence Belleforest adopted it in his collection of novels, in seven volumes, which he began in 1564, and continued to publish through succeeding years. From this work, *The Hystorie of Hamblett*, quarto, bl. l. was translated. I have hitherto met with no earlier edition of the play than one in the year 1604, though it must have been performed before that time, as I have seen a copy of Speght's edition of Chaucer, which formerly belonged to Dr. Gabriel Harvey, (the antagonist of Nash) who in his own hand-writing, has set down Hamlet, as a performance with which he was well acquainted, in the year 1598. His words are these: "The younger sort take much delight in Shakspeare's Venus and Adonis; but his Locrine, and his tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmark, have it in them to please the wiser sort, 1598."

In the books of the Stationers' Company, this play was entered by James Roberts, July 26, 1602, under the title of "A booke called *The Revenge*

of Hamlett, Prince of Denmarke, as it was lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain his servantes."

In *Eastward Hoe*, by George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston, 1605, is a fling at the Hero of this tragedy. A footman named *Hamlet* enters, and a tankard-bearer asks him—"Sfoote, *Hamlet*, are you mad?"

The frequent allusions of contemporary authors to this play sufficiently show its popularity. Thus, in Decker's *Bel-man's Nightwalkes*, 4to. 1612, we have—"But if any mad *Hamlet*, hearing this, smell villainie, and rush in by violence to see what the tawny diuels [gypsies] are dooing, then they excuse the fact" &c. Again, in an old collection of Satirical Poems, called *The Night Raven*, is this couplet:

"I will not cry *Hamlet Revenge* my greeves,
"But I will call Hangman, Revenge on Thieves."
STEEVENS.

Surely no satire was intended in *Eastward Hoe*, which was acted at Shakspeare's own playhouse, (Blackfriars,) by the children of the revels, in 1605.
MALONE.

The following particulars relative to the date of this piece, are borrowed from Dr. Farmer's *Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare*, p. 85, 86, second edition:

"Greene, in the Epistle prefixed to his *Arcadia*, hath a lash at some 'vaine glorious tragedians,' and very plainly at Shakspeare in particular. — 'I leave all these to the mercy of their mother-tongue, that feed on nought but the crums that fall from the translator's trencher. — That could scarcely latinize their neck verse if they should have neede, yet *English Seneca* read by candlelight yeelds many good sentences — hee will afford you whole

Hamlets, I should say, *handfuls* of tragically speeches.'—I cannot determine exactly when this *Epistle* was first published; but, I fancy, it will carry the original *Hamlet* somewhat further back than we have hitherto done: and it may be observed, that the oldest copy now extant, is said to be 'enlarged to almost as much againe as it was.' *Gabriel Harvey* printed at the end of the year 1592, 'Foure Letters and certaine Sonnetts, especially touching *Robert Greene*:' in one of which his *Arcadia* is mentioned. Now *Nash's* *Epistle* must have been previous to these, as *Gabriel* is quoted in it with applause; and the *Foure Letters* were the beginning of a quarrel. *Nash* replied in 'Strange News of the intercepting certaine Letters, and a Convoy of Verses, as they were going *privilie* to victual the *Low Countries*, 1593.' *Harvey* rejoined the same year in '*Pierce's* Supererogation, or a new Praise of the old Asse.' And *Nash* again, in 'Have with you to *Saffron Walden*, or *Gabriell Harvey's* Hunt is up;' containing a full answer to the eldest sonne of the halter-maker, 1596."—*Nash* died before 1606, as appears from an old comedy called *The Return from Parnassus*. STEEVENS.

A play on the subject of *Hamlet* had been exhibited on the stage before the year 1589, of which *Thomas Kyd* was, I believe, the author. On that play, and on the bl. letter *Historie of Hamblet*, our poet, I conjecture, constructed the tragedy before us. The earliest edition of the prose-narrative which I have seen, was printed in 1603, but it undoubtedly was a republication.

Shakspeare's *Hamlet* was written, if my conjecture be well founded, in 1596. See *An Attempt to ascertain the Order of his Plays*. MALONE.

Page 2, line 3. *Hamlet,*] i. e. *Amleth*. The *h* transferred from the end to the beginning of the name. STEEVENS.

P. 3, l. 9. — answer *me*:] i. e. *me* who am already on the watch, and have a right to demand the watch-word. STEEVENS.

P. 3, l. 11. *Long live the King!*] This sentence appears to have been the watch-word.

STEEVENS.

P. 3, l. 16. *'Tis now struck twelve;*] I strongly suspect that the true reading is — *new* struck, &c.

STEEVENS.

P. 4, l. 3. 4. *If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,*

The rivals of my watch,] *Rivals* for partners. WARBURTON.

By *rivals* the speaker certainly means *partners* (according to Dr. Warburton's explanation,) or those whom he expected to watch with him. Marcellus had watched with him before; whether as a centinel, a volunteer, or from mere curiosity, we do not learn: but, which ever it was, it seems evident that his station was on the same spot with Bernardo, and that there is no other centinel by them relieved. Possibly Marcellus was an officer, whose business it was to visit each watch, and perhaps to continue with it some time. Horatio, as it appears, watches out of curiosity. But in act II. sc. i. to Hamlet's question, — "Hold you the watch to-night?" Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo, all answer, — "We do, my honour'd Lord." The folio indeed, reads — *both*, which one may with great propriety refer to Marcellus and Bernardo. If we did not find the latter gentleman in such good company, we might have taken him to have been like Francisco whom he relieves, an honest

honest but common soldier. The strange indiscriminate use of Italian and Roman names in this and other plays, makes it obvious that the author was very little conversant in even the rudiments of either language. KITSON.

Rival is constantly used by Shakspeare for a partner or associate. In Bullokar's *English Expositor*, 8vo. 1616, it is defined, "*One that sueth for the same thing with another;*" and hence Shakspeare, with his usual licence, always uses it in the sense of *one engaged in the same employments or office with another*. *Competitor*, which is explained by Bullokar by the very same words which he has employed in the definition of *rival*, is in like manner (as Mr. M. Mason has observed,) always used by Shakspeare for *associate*.

M. Warner would read and point thus :

If you do meet Horatio, and Marcellus
The rival of my watch,—

because Horatio is a gentleman of no profession; and because, as he conceived, there was but one person on each watch. But there is no need of change. Horatio is certainly not an officer, but Hamlet's fellow-student at Wittenberg: but as he accompanied Marcellus and Bernardo on the watch from a motive of curiosity, our poet considers him very properly as an *associate* with them. Horatio himself says to Hamlet in a subsequent scene,

"— This to me

"In dreadful secrecy impart they did,

"And I with them the third night kept the
watch." MALONE.

P. 4, l. 18. *A piece of him.*] But why a *piece*? He says this as he gives his hand. Which direction should be marked. WARBURTON.

A piece of him, is, I believe, no more than a cant expression. It is used, however, on a serious occasion in *Pericles*. STEEVENS.

P. 4, l. 28. — *to watch the minutes of this night;*] This seems to have been an expression common in Shakspeare's time. STEEVENS.

P. 4, l. 30. He may *approve our eyes*,] Add a new testimony to that of our eyes. JOHNSON.

He may make good the testimony of our eyes; be assured by his own experience of the truth of that which *we* have related, in consequence of *having been eye-witnesses to it*. To *approve* in Shakspeare's age, signified to *make good*, or *establish*. MALONE.

P. 5, first l. *What we two nights have seen.*] This line is by Sir T. Hanmer given to Marcellus, but without necessity. JOHNSON.

P. 5, l. 14. *Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.*] It has always been a vulgar notion that spirits and supernatural beings can only be spoken to with propriety or effect by persons of learning.

Thus the honest butler in Mr. Addison's *Drummer*, recommends the steward to speak *Latin* to the ghost in that play. REED.

P. 5, l. 17. — *it harrows me*—] To *harrow* is to conquer, to subdue. The word is of Saxon origin. STEEVENS.

P. 6, l. 9. — *parle*,] This is one of the affected words introduced by Lyly. STEEVENS.

P. 6, l. 10. — *sledded*—] A *sled*, or *sledge*, is a carriage without wheels, made use of in the cold countries. STEEVENS.

P. 6, l. 10 — *Polack*—] *Pole-ax* in the common editions. He speaks of a Prince of Poland

whom he slew in battle. He uses the word *Polack* again, Act II. sc. iv. POPE.

Polack was, in that age, the term for an inhabitant of Poland: *Polaque*, French. JOHNSON.

All the old copies have *Polax*. Mr. Pope and the subsequent editors read — *Polack*; but the corrupted word shews, I think, that Shakspeare wrote — *Polacks*. MALONE.

With *Polack* for *Polander*, the transcriber, or printer, might have no acquaintance; he therefore substituted *pole-ax* as the only word of like sound that was familiar to his ear. Unluckily, however, it happened that the *singular* of the latter has the same sound as the *plural* of the former. Hence it has been supposed that Shakspeare meant to write *Polacks*. We cannot well suppose that in a *parley* the King belaboured many, as it is not likely that provocation was given by more than one, or that on such an occasion he would have condescended to strike a meaner person than a Prince. STEEVENS.

P. 6, l. 12. — *and jump at this dead hour,*] So, the 4to. 1604. The folio — *just*. STEEVENS.

The correction was probably made by the author. JOHNSON.

In the folio we sometimes find a familiar word substituted for one more ancient. MALONE.

Jump and *just* were synonymous in the time of Shakspeare. Ben Jonson speaks of verses made on *jump names*, i. e. names that suit exactly.

STEEVENS.

P. 6, l. 15. *In what particular thought to work,*] What particular train of thinking to follow. STEEVENS.

P. 6, l. 17. — *in the gross and scope*] General thoughts, and tendency at large. JOHNSON.

P. 6, l. 25. *Why such impress of shipwrights,*] Judge Barrington, *Observations on the more ancient Statutes*, p. 300, having observed that Shakspeare gives English manners to every country where his scene lies, infers from this passage, that in the time even of Queen Elizabeth, shipwrights as well as seamen were forced to serve. WHALLEY.

Impress signifies only the act of retaining shipwrights by giving them what was called *prest money* (from *pret*, Fr.) for holding themselves in *readiness* to be employed. STEEVENS.

P. 7, l. 3. Well ratified by *law, and heraldry,*] Mr. Upton says, that Shakspeare sometimes expresses one thing by two substantives, and that *law and heraldry* means, by the *herald law*.

STEEVENS.

Puttenham, in his *Art of Poesie*, speaks of the *Figure of Twynnes*, "*horses and barbes, for barbed horses, venim & dartes, for venomous dartes,*" &c. FARMER.

That is, according to the forms of *law heraldry*. When the right of property was to be determined by combat, the rules of *heraldry* were to be attended to, as well as those of *law*. M. MASON.

i. e. to be well ratified by the rules of law, and the forms prescribed *jure fecialy*; such as proclamation, &c. MALONE.

P. 7, l. 9-11. — by the same *co-mart*,

And *carriage* of the article *design'd,*] *Comart* signifies a bargain, and *carrying of the article*, the *covenant* entered into to confirm that bargain. Hence we see the common reading [*covenant*] makes a tautology. WARBURTON.

Co-mart is, I suppose, a *joint bargain*, a word perhaps of our poet's coinage. A *mart* signifying a great fair or market, he would not have scrupled

to have written — *to mart*, in the sense of *to make a bargain*. In the preceding speech we find *mart* used for bargain or purchase. MALONE.

Carriage, is import: design'd, is formed, drawn up between them. JOHNSON.

Cawdrey in his *Alphabetical Table*, 1604, defines the verb *design* thus: "To marke out or appoint for any purpose." See also Minsheu's Dict. 1617. "To *designe* or shew by a token." *Designed* is yet used in this sense in Scotland.

MALONE.

P. 7, l. 13. *Of unimproved mettle hot and full,]* *Full of unimproved mettle*, is full of spirit not regulated or guided by knowledge or experience. JOHNSON.

P. 7, l. 15. *Shark'd up a list of landless resolute,]* I believe, to *shark up* means to pick up without distinction, as the *shark*-fish collects his prey. The quartos read *lawless*, instead of *landless*. STEEVENS.

P. 7, l. 16. 17. — — — enterprize

That hath a *stomach* in't:] *Stomach*, in the time of our author, was used for *constancy*, *resolution*. JOHNSON.

P. 7, l. 24. *post-haste and romage]* Tumultuous hurry. JOHNSON.

P. 7, l. 25. and fol. These, and all other lines confined within crotchets throughout this play, are omitted in the folio edition of 1623. The omissions leave the play sometimes better and sometimes worse, and seem made only for the sake of abbreviation. JOHNSON.

It may be worth while to observe, that the title-pages of the first quartos in 1604 and 1605, declare this play to be *enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect copy.*

Perhaps therefore many of its absurdities as well as beauties arose from the quantity added after it was first written. Our poet might have been more attentive to the amplification than the coherence of his fable.

The degree of credit due to the title-page that styles the MS. from which the quartos, 1604 and 1605 were printed, the *true and perfect copy*, may also be disputable. I cannot help supposing this publication to contain all Shakspeare rejected, as well as all he supplied. By restorations like the former, contending booksellers or theatres might have gained some temporary advantage over each other, which at this distance of time is not to be understood. The patience of our ancestors exceeded our own, could it have outlasted the tragedy of *Hamlet* as it is now printed; for it must have occupied almost five hours in representation. If, however, it was too much dilated on the ancient stage, it is as injudiciously contracted on the modern one. STEEVENS.

P. 7, l. 26. *Well may it sort,*] The cause and effect are proportionate and suitable. JOHNSON.

P. 7, l. 28. — the *question* —] The theme or subject. MALONE.

P. 7, l. 29. *A mote* —] The first quarto reads — *a moth*. STEEVENS.

A moth was only the old spelling of *mote*.

MALONE.

P. 7, l. 30. *In the most high and palmy state of Rome,*] *Palmy* for *victorious*. POPE.

P. 7, last l. *As, stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,*

Disasters in the sun;] Mr. Rowe altered

these lines, because they have insufficient connection with the preceding one, thus:

Stars shone with trains of fire, dews of blood fell,

Disasters veil'd the sun, —.

This passage is not in the folio. By the quartos therefore our imperfect text is supplied: for an intermediate verse being evidently lost, it were idle to attempt a union that never was intended. I have therefore signified the supposed deficiency by a vacant space.

When Shakspeare had told us that the *graves stood tenantless*, &c. which are wonders confined to the earth, he naturally proceeded to say (in the line now lost) that *yet other prodigies appeared in the sky*; and these phaenomena he exemplified by adding, — *As* [i. e. as for instance] *Stars with trains of fire*, &c. STEEVENS.

P. 8, l. 3-5. *And even the like precurse of fierce events, —*

As harbingers preceding still the fates,

And prologue to the omen coming on, —]

Not only such prodigies have been seen in Rome, but the elements have shown our countrymen like forerunners and foretokens of violent events.

JOHNSON.

Fierce, for *terrible*. WARBURTON.

I rather believe that *fierce* signifies *conspicuous glaring*. STEEVENS.

But *prologue* and *omen* are merely synonymous here. The poet means, that these strange *phaenomena* are prologues and forerunners of the events *presag'd*: and such sense the slight alteration, which I have ventured to make, by changing *omen* to *omen'd*, very aptly gives. THEOBALD.

Omen, for *fate*. WARBURTON.

Hanmer follows Theobald.

A distich from the life of Merlin, by Heywood, however, will show that there is no occasion for correction:

"*Merlin well vers'd in many a hidden spell,
His countries omen did long since foretell.*"
FARMER.

Omen, I believe, is danger. STEEVENS.

P. 8, l. 10. and fol. The speech of Horatio to the spectre is very elegant and noble, and congruous to the common traditions of the causes of apparitions. JOHNSON.

P. 8, l. 19. 21. — *if thou hast uphoarded in
thy life*

*Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk
in death,]* So, in Dec-

ker's *Knight's Conjuring*, &c. "— If any of them had bound the spirit of gold by any charms *in caves, or in iron fetters under the ground*, they should *for their own soules quiet (which questionlesse else would whine up and down)* if not for the good of their children, release it."

STEEVENS.

P. 8, l. 23 - 26. — Stop it, Marcellus.

Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partizan?

Hor. *Do, if it will not stand.]* I am unwilling to suppose that Shakspeare could appropriate these absurd effusions to *Horatio*, who is a scholar, and has sufficiently proved his good understanding by the propriety of his addresses to the phantom. Such a man therefore must have known that

"As easy might he the intrenchant air

"With his keen sword impress,"

as commit any act of violence on the royal shadow.

The words — *Stop it, Marcellus*, — and *Do, if it will not stand* — better suit the next speaker, *Bernardo*, who, in the true spirit of an unlettered officer, *nihil non arroget armis*. Perhaps the first idea that occurs to a man of this description, is to strike at what offends him. Nicholas Poussin, in his celebrated picture of the Crucifixion, has introduced a similiar occurrence. While lots are casting for the sacred vesture, the graves are giving up their dead. This prodigy is perceived by one of the soldiers, who instantly grasps his sword, as if preparing to defend himself, or resent such an invasion from the other world.

The two next speeches — '*Tis here!* — '*Tis here!* may be allotted to *Marcellus* and *Bernardo*; and the third — '*Tis gone!* &c. to *Horatio*, whose superiority of character indeed seems to demand it. — As the text now stands, *Marcellus* proposes to strike the Ghost with his partizan, and yet afterwards is made to descant on the indecorum and impotence of such an attempt.

The names of speakers have so often been confounded by the first publishers of our author, that I suggest this change with less hesitation than I should express concerning any conjecture that could operate to the disadvantage of his words or meaning. — Had the assignment of the old copies been such, would it have been thought liable to objection? STEEVENS.

P. 9. l. 5-9. — and, at his warning,

Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,

The extravagant and erring spirit hies

To his confine: and of &c.] According to the

pneumatology of that time, every element was inhabited by its peculiar order of spirits, who had dispositions different, according to their various

places of abode. The meaning therefore is, that ill *spirits extravagant*, wandering out of their element, whether aërial spirits visiting earth, or earthly spirits ranging the air, return to their station, to their proper limits in which they are *confined*. We might read:

“— And at his warning

“Th’ extravagant and erring spirit hies

“To his confine, whether in sea or air,

“Or earth, or fire. And of,” &c.

But this change, though it would smooth the construction, is not necessary, and, being unnecessary, should not be made against authority.

JOHNSON.

A Chorus in Andreini’s drama, called *Adamo*, written in 1613, consists of spirits of fire, air, water, and hell, or subterraneous, being the exiled angels. “Choro di Spiriti ignei, aerei, acquatici, ed infernali,” &c. These are the demons to which Shakspeare alludes. These spirits were supposed to controul the elements in which they respectively resided; and when formally invoked or commanded by a magician, to produce tempests, conflagrations, floods, and earthquakes. T. WARTON.

Bourne of Newcastle, in his *Antiquities of the common People*, inform us, “It is a received tradition among the vulgar, that at the time of cockcrow, the midnight spirits forsake these lower regions, and go to their proper places. — Hence it is, (says he) that in country places, where the way of life requires more early labour, they always go chearfully to work at that time; whereas if they are called abroad sooner, they imagine every thing they see, a wandering ghost.” And he quotes on this occasion, as all his predecessors had done, the well-known lines from the first hymn

of *Prudentius*. I know not whose translation he gives us, but there is an old one by Haywood. The *pious chansons*, the *hymns* and *carrols*, which Shakspeare mentions presently, were usually copied from the elder Christian poets. FARMER.

Extravagant i. e. got out of his bounds.

WARBURTON.

P. 9, l. 10. *It faded on the crowing of the cock;*] This is a very ancient superstition. Philostratus giving an account of the apparition of Achilles' shade to Apollonius Tyanæus, says that it vanished with a little glimmer as soon as the *cock crowed*. Vit. Apol. iv. 16. STEEVENS.

Faded has here its original sense; it *vanished*. *Vado*, Lat. MALONE.

P. 9, l. 16. No fairy *takes*,] No fairy *strikes* with lameness or diseases. This sense of *take* is frequent in this author. JOHNSON.

P. 10. l. 17. *With one auspicious, and one dropping eye;*] Perhaps, we have here only the ancient proverbial phrase—"To cry with one eye and laugh with the other," buckram'd by our author for the service of tragedy. See *Ray's Collection*, edit. 1768, p. 188. STEEVENS.

Dropping in this line probably means *depressed* or cast downwards. It may, however, signify *weeping*. "*Dropping of the eyes*" was a technical expression in our author's time. MALONE.

P. 10, l. 29. *Colleagued with this dream of his advantage,*] The meaning is, — He goes to war so indiscreetly, and unprepared, that he has no allies to support him but a *dream*, with which he is *colleagued* or confederated. WARBURTON.

This dream of his advantage (as Mr. M. Mason observes) means only "this imaginary advantage, which Fortinbras hoped to derive from the state of the kingdom." STEEVENS.

P. 11, l. 5. 6. — *to suppress*

His further gait herein ;] *Gate* or *gait* is here used in the northern sense, for *proceeding, passage*; from the A. S. verb *gae*. A *gate* for a path, passage, or street, is still current in the north. PERCY.

P. 11, l. 12. 13. — *more than the scope*

Of these dilated articles allow,] *More* is comprized in the general design of these articles, which you may explain in a more diffuse and dilated style. JOHNSON.

— *these dilated articles]* i. e. the articles when dilated. MUSGRAVE.

— *allow*. The poet should have written *allows*. Many writers fall into this error, when a plural noun immediately precedes the verb. MALONE.

P. 11, l. 25 - 27. *The head is not more native to the heart,*

*The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy
father.]* The sense

seems to be this: The head is not formed to be more useful to the heart, the hand is not more at the service of the mouth, than my power is at your father's service. That is, he may command me to the utmost, he may do what he pleases with my kingly authority. STEEVENS.

By *native to the heart* Dr. Johnson understands, "natural and congenial to it, born with it, and co-operating with it."

Formerly the heart was supposed the seat of

wisdom; and hence the poet speaks of the close connexion between the heart and head. MALONE.

P. 12, l. 8-10. *Take thy fair hour, Laertes:
time be thine,*

And thy best graces: spend it at thy will.]

The sense is, — You have my leave to go, Laertes: make the fairest use you please of your time, and spend it at your will with the fairest graces you are master of." THEOBALD.

I rather think this line is in want of emendation. I read:

*time is thine,
And my best graces: spend it at thy will.*

JOHNSON.

P. 12, l. 11-13. But now, my cousin Hamlet,
and my son, —

Ham. *A little more than kin, and less
than kind.] Kind is*
the Teutonick word for *child*. Hamlet therefore answers with propriety, to the titles of *cousin* and *son*, which the King had given him, that he was somewhat more than *cousin*, and less than *son*.

JOHNSON.

In this line, with which Shakspeare introduces *Hamlet*, Dr. Johnson has perhaps pointed out a nicer distinction than it can justly boast of. To establish the sense contended for, it should have been proved that *kind* was ever used by an English writer for *child*. *A little more than kin*, is a little more than a common relation. The King was certainly something *less than kind*, by having betrayed the mother of Hamlet into an indecent and incestuous marriage, and obtained the crown by means which he suspects to be unjustifiable. In the fifth act, the Prince accuses his uncle of having *popp'd in between the election and his hopes*,

which obviates Dr. Warburton's objection to the old reading, viz. that "the King had given no occasion for such a reflection."

As *kind*, however, signifies *nature*, Hamlet may mean that his relationship was become an *unnatural* one, as it was partly founded upon incest.

Dr. Farmer, however, observes that *kin* is still used for *cousin* in the midland counties.

STEEVENS.

Hamlet does not, I think, mean to say, as Mr. Steevens supposes, that *his uncle* is a little more than kin, &c. The King had called the Prince — "My cousin Hamlet, and my son." — His reply, therefore, is, — "I am a little more than thy kinsman, [for I am thy stepson;] and somewhat less than kind to thee, [for I hate thee, as being the person who has entered into an incestuous marriage with my mother]. Or, if we understand *kind* in its ancient sense, then the meaning will be, — *I am more than thy kinsman, for I am thy step-son; being such, I am less near to thee than thy natural offspring*, and therefore not entitled to the appellation of *son*, which you have now given me. MALONE.

P. 12, l. 16. 17. — *I am too much i'the sun.*] He perhaps alludes to the proverb, "Out of heaven's blessing into the warm sun." JOHNSON.

Meaning probably his being sent for from his studies to be exposed at his uncle's marriage as his *chiefest courtier*, &c. STEEVENS.

I question whether a quibble between *sun* and *son* be not here intended. FARMER.

P. 12, l. 20. — *with thy vailed lids*] With lowering eyes, cast down eyes. JOHNSON.

P. 12, l. 22. *Thou know'st, 'tis common; all, that live, must die,*]

Perhaps the semicolon placed in this line, is improper. The sense, elliptically expressed, is, — Thou knowest it is common *that* all that live, must die. — The first *that* is omitted for the sake of metre, a practice often followed by Shakspeare.
STEEVENS.

P. 13, l. 6. 7. — *your father lost a father:*
That father lost, lost his;] Mr. Pope judiciously corrected the faulty copies thus:
— *your father lost a father;*
That father, his;

On which the editor Mr. Theobald thus descants: — *This supposed refinement is from Mr. Pope, but all the editions else, that I have met with, old and modern, read,*

That father lost, lost his; —
The reduplication of which word here gives an energy and an elegance, WHICH IS MUCH EASIER TO BE CONCEIVED THAN EXPLAINED IN TERMS. I believe so: for when explained in terms it comes to this: — That father after he had lost himself, lost his father. But the reading is ex fide codicis, and that is enough. WARBURTON.

I do not admire the repetition of the word, but it has so much of our author's manner, that I find no temptation to recede from the old copies.

JOHNSON.

The meaning of the passage is no more than this, — *Your father lost a father, i. e. your grandfather, which lost grandfather, also lost his father.*

The metre, however, in my opinion, shows that Mr. Pope's correction should be adopted. The sense, though elliptically expressed, will still be the same. STEEVENS.

P. 13, l. 9. — *obsequious sorrow* :] *Obsequious* is here from *obsequies*, or *funeral ceremonies*.

JOHNSON.

P. 13, l. 10. *In obstinate condolment*,] *Condolment*, for *sorrow*. WARBURTON.

P. 13, l. 12. *It shows a will most incorrect to heaven* ;] *Incorrect*, for *untutor'd*. WARBURTON.

Incorrect does not mean *untutored*, as Warburton explains it; but *ill-regulated*, not *sufficiently subdued*. M. MASON.

Not sufficiently regulated by a sense of duty and submission to the dispensations of providence.

MALONE.

P. 13, l. 20. *To reason most absurd* ;] *Reason* is here used in its common sense, for the *faculty* by which we form conclusions from arguments. JOHNSON.

P. 13, l. 27. — *with no less nobility of love*,] *Nobility* for *magnitude*. WARBURTON.

Nobility is rather *generosity*. JOHNSON.

By *nobility of love*, Mr. Heath understands, *eminence and distinction of love*. MALONE.

P. 13, l. 28. 29. *Than that which dearest father bears his son,*

Do I impart toward you.] I believe *impart* is, *impart myself, communicate* whatever I can bestow. JOHNSON.

The crown of Denmark was elective.

The King means that as Hamlet stands the fairest chance to be next elected, he will strive with as much love to ensure the crown to him, as a father would show in the continuance of heirdom to a son. STEEVENS.

I agree with Mr. Steevens, that the crown of Denmark (as in most of the Gothick kingdoms)
was

was elective, and not hereditary; though it might be customary, in elections, to pay some attention to the royal blood, which by degrees produced hereditary succession. Why then do the rest of the commentators so often treat Claudius as an *usurper*, who had deprived young Hamlet of his *right* by *heirship* to his father's crown? Hamlet calls him drunkard, murderer, and villain; one who had carried the election by low and mean practices; had

“Popp'd in between the election and my hopes —”

“Had from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
“And put it in his pocket:”

but never hints at his being an *usurper*. His discontent arose from his uncle's being preferred before him, not from any legal right which he pretended to set up to the crown. Some regard was probably had to the recommendation of the preceding Prince, in electing the successor. And therefore young Hamlet had “the voice of the King himself for his succession in Denmark;” and he at his own death prophecies that “the election would light on Fortinbras, who had his dying voice,” conceiving that by the death of his uncle, he himself had been King for an instant, and had therefore a right to recommend. When, in the fourth act, the rabble wished to choose Laertes King, I understand that antiquity was forgot and custom violated, by electing a new King in the life-time of the old one, and perhaps also by the calling in a stranger to the royal blood.

BLACKSTONE.

P. 13, l. 29. 30. — For your intent

In going back to school in *Wittenberg*.] In Shakspeare's time there was an university at Wit-

tenberg, to which he has made Hamlet propose to return.

The university of Wittenberg, was not founded till 1502 consequently did not exist in the time to which this play is referred. MALONE.

Our author may have derived his knowledge of this famous university from *The Life of Iacke Wilton*, 1594, or *The History of Doctor Faustus*, of whom the *second report* (printed in the same year) is said to be "written by an English gentleman, student in Wittenberg, an University of Germany in Saxony." RITSON.

P. 13, l. 32. — *bend you to remain*] i. e. subdue your inclination to go from hence, and remain, &c. STEEVENS.

P. 14, l. 6. *Sits smiling to my heart:*] Surely it should be —

Sits smiling on my heart. RITSON.

To my heart, I believe signifies — *near to, close, next to*, my heart. STEEVENS.

P. 14, l. 7. *No jocund health, that Denmark drinks to-day,*] The King's intemperance is very strongly impressed; every thing that happens to him gives him occasion to drink. JOHNSON.

P. 14, l. 9. — *The King's rouse* —] The King's draught of jollity. STEEVENS.

P. 14, l. 15. — *and resolve itself into a dew!*] *Resolve* means the same as dissolve. STEEVENS.

P. 14, l. 16. 17. *Or that the everlasting had not fix'd*

His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!] The generality of the editions read — *cannon*, as if the poet's thought were, — Or, *that the Almighty had not planted his artillery, or arms of vengeance, against self-murder.* But the word which

I restored (and which was espoused by the accurate Mr. Hughes, who gave an edition of this play) is the true reading, i. e. *that he had not restrained suicide by his express law and peremptory prohibition.* THEOBALD.

There are yet those who suppose the old reading to be the true one, as they say the word *fixed* seems to decide very strongly in its favour. I would advise such to recollect Virgil's expression:

“—— *fixit leges pretio, atque refixit.*”

STEEVENS.

In Shakspeare's time *canon* (*norma*) was commonly spelt *cannon*. MALONE.

P. 14, l. 23. — *merely.*] is *entirely, absolutely.* STEEVENS.

P. 14, l. 26. 27. So excellent a King; that was,
to this,

Hyperion to a satyr:] This similitude at first sight seems to be a little far-fetched; but it has an exquisite beauty. By the *Satyr* is meant *Pan*, as by *Hyperion*, *Apollo*. *Pan* and *Apollo* were brothers, and the allusion is to the contention between those gods for the preference in musick.

WARBURTON.

All our English poets are guilty of the same false quantity, and call *Hyp̃erion* *Hyp̃erion*; at least the only instance I have met with to the contrary, is in the old play of *Fuimus Troes*, 1333:

“—— Blow gentle *Africus*,

“Play on our poops, when *Hyp̃erion* son

“Shall couch in west.”

Shakspeare, I believe, has no allusion in the present instance, except to the beauty of *Apollo*, and its immediate opposite, the deformity of a *Satyr*. STEEVENS.

Hyperion or *Apollo* is represented in all the an-

the quartos) *beteeme*, was changed, as above, by Mr. Theobald; and with the aptitude of his conjecture succeeding criticks appear to have been satisfied.

Beteeme, however, occurs in the tenth book of Arthur Golding's version of *Ovid's Metamorphosis*, 4to. 1587; and, from the corresponding Latin, must necessarily signify, to *vouchsafe*, *deign*, *permit*, or *suffer*.

The existence and signification of the verb *be-teem* being established, it follows, that the attention of Hamlet's father to his Queen was exactly such as is described in the Enterlude of the *Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalaine*, &c. by Lewis Wager, 4to. 1567:

"But evermore they were unto me very
tender,

"They would not suffer the wynde on me
to blowe."

I have therefore replaced the ancient reading, without the slightest hesitation, in the text.

This note was inserted by me in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, some years before Mr. Malone's edition of our author (in which the same justification of the old reading — *beteeme*, occurs,) had made its appearance. STEEVENS.

This passage ought to be a perpetual memento to all future editors and commentators to proceed with the utmost caution in emendation, and never to discard a word from the text, merely because it is not the language of the present day.

Mr. Hughes or Mr. Rowe, supposing the text to be unintelligible, for *beteeme* boldly substituted *permitted*. Mr. Theobald, in order to favour his own emendation, stated untruly that *all* the old copies which he had seen, read *beteene*. His

emendation appearing uncommonly happy, was adopted by all the subsequent editors. MALONE.

P. 15, l. 19. 20. — *I'll change that name with you.*] I'll be your servant, you shall be my friend. JOHNSON.

P. 15, l. 21. — *what make you* —] A familiar phrase for *what are you doing*. JOHNSON.

P. 15, l. 24. — *good even,*] So the copies. Sir Thomas Hanmer and Dr. Warburton put it — *good morning*. The alteration is of no importance, but all licence is dangerous. There is no need of any change. Between the first and eighth scene of this act it is apparent, that a natural day must pass, and how much of it is already over, there is nothing that can determine. The King has held a council. It may now as well be *evening* as *morning*. JOHNSON.

P. 15, l. 5-7. — *the funeral bak'd meats Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.*] It was anciently the general custom to give a cold entertainment to mourners at a funeral. In distant counties this practice is continued among the yeomanry.

COLLINS.

P. 16, l. 8. '*Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven*] *Dearest* for *direst*, most dreadful, most dangerous.

JOHNSON.

Dearest is most immediate, consequential, important. MALONE.

P. 16, l. 16. I shall *not look upon his like again.*] Mr. Holt proposes to read from an emendation of Sir Thomas Samwell, Bart. of Upton, near Northampton:

Eye shall not look upon his like again; and thinks it is more in the true spirit of Shak-

speare than the other. So, in Stowe's *Chronicle*, p. 746: "In the greatest pomp that ever eye behelde." STEEVENS.

P. 16, l. 21. Season *your admiration*] That is, temper it. JOHNSON.

P. 16, l. 22. *With an attent ear* ;] Spenser, as well as our poet, uses *attent* for *attentive*.

MALONE.

P. 16, l. 28. *In the dead waist and middle of the night* ,] This strange phraseology seems to have been common in the time of Shakspeare. By *waist* is meant nothing more than *middle* ; and hence the epithet *dead* did not appear incongruous to our poet.

MALONE.

Dead waste may be the true reading.

STEEVENS.

P. 16, l. 34. 35. — — — distill'd

Almost to jelly with the act of fear ,] *Fear* was the cause, the active cause that *distilled* them by that force of operation which we strictly call *act* in voluntary, and *power* in involuntary agents, but popularly call *act* in both. JOHNSON.

P. 17, l. 10-12. Ham. *Did you not speak to it?*

Hor. *My Lord, I did;*

But answer made it none :] Fielding, who was well acquainted with vulgar superstitions, in his *Tom Jones*, B. XI. ch. ii. observes that Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "like a ghost, only wanted to be spoke to," but then very readily answered. It seems from this passage, as well as from others in books too mean to be formally quoted, that spectres were supposed to maintain an obdurate silence, till interrogated by the people to whom they appeared.

The drift therefore of Hamlet's question is, whether his father's shade had been spoken to; and not whether Horatio as a particular or privileged person, was the speaker to it. Horatio tells us he had seen the late King but once, and therefore cannot be imagined to have any particular interest with his apparition.

The vulgar notion that a ghost could only be spoken to with propriety and effect by a scholar, agrees very well with the character of Marcellus, a common officer; but it would have disgraced the Prince of Denmark to have supposed the spectre would more readily comply with Horatio's solicitation, merely because it was that of a man who had been studying at a university.

We are at liberty to think the Ghost would have replied to Francisco, Bernardo, or Marcellus, had either of them ventured to question it. It was actually preparing to address Horatio, when the cock crew. The convenience of Shakspeare's play, however, required that the phantom should continue dumb, till Hamlet could be introduced to hear what was to remain concealed in his own breast, or to be communicated by him to some intelligent friend, like Horatio, in whom he could implicitly confide.

By what particular person therefore an apparition which exhibits itself only for the purpose of being urged to speak, was addressed, could be of no consequence.

Be it remembered likewise that the words are not as lately pronounced on the stage, — “Did not *you* speak to it?” — but — “Did you not *speak* to it?” — How awkward will the innovated sense appear, if attempted to be produced from the passage as it really stands in the true copies!

Did you not speak to it?

The emphasis, therefore, should most certainly rest on — *speak*. STEEVENS.

P. 17, l. 15-17. — *the morning cock crew loud;*

*And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.]* The moment of the evanescence of spirits was supposed to be limited to the crowing of the cock. This belief is mentioned so early as by Prudentius, *Cathem. Hymn.* l. v. 40. But some of his commentators prove it to be of much higher antiquity.

It is a most inimitable circumstance in Shakspeare, so to have managed this popular idea, as to make the Ghost, which has been so long obstinately silent, and of course must be dismissed by the morning, begin or rather prepare to speak, and to be interrupted, at the very critical time of the crowing of a cock.

Another poet, according to custom, would have suffered his ghost tamely to vanish, without contriving this start, which is like a start of guilt. To say nothing of the aggravation of the future suspense, occasioned by this preparation to speak and impart some mysterious secret. Less would have been expected, had nothing been promised.

T. WARTON.

P. 17, l. 53. — *he wore his beaver up.]* Though *beaver* properly signified that part of the helmet which was *let down*, to enable the wearer to drink, Shakspeare always uses the word as denoting that part of the helmet which, when raised up, exposed the face of the wearer: and such was the popular signification of the word in his time.

MALONE.

P. 18, l. 32. *My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;*] From what went before, I once hinted to Mr. Garrick, that these words might be spoken in this manner:

My father's spirit! in arms! all is not well;— WHALLEY.

P. 19, l. 16. 17. — — *sweet, not lasting, The perfume and suppliance of a minute;*] Thus the quarto: the folio has it:

— — *sweet, not lasting,
The suppliance of a minute.*

It is plain that *perfume* is necessary to exemplify the idea of *sweet, not lasting*. With the word *suppliance* I am not satisfied, and yet dare hardly offer what I imagine to be right. I suspect that *soffiance*, or some such word, formed from the Italian, was then used for the act of fumigating with sweet scents. JOHNSON.

The perfume and suppliance of a minute; i. e. what is supplied to us for a minute; or, as Mr. M. Mason supposes, “an amusement to fill up a vacant moment, and render it agreeable.”

STEEVENS.

P. 19, l. 22. *In thews,*] i. e. in sinews, muscular strength. STEEVENS.

P. 19, l. 25. *And now no soil, nor cautel, doth besmirch*

The virtue of his will;] *Cautel* from *cautela*, which signifies only a prudent foresight or caution; but, passing through French hands, it lost its innocence, and now signifies *fraud, deceit*. And so he uses the adjective in *Julius Caesar*:

“Swear priests and cowards, and men *cautelous*.” WARBURTON.

Cautel is subtlety or deceit. Minsheu in his

Dictionary, 1617, defines it, "A crafty way to deceive."

Virtue seems here to comprise both *excellence* and *power*, and may be explained the *pure effect*.
JOHNSON.

The *virtue of his will* means, his *virtuous intentions*. *Cautel* means *craft*. M. MASON.

P. 20, l. 11. — *unmaster'd*] i. e. *licentious*.
JOHNSON.

P. 20, l. 13. And *keep you in the rear of your affection,*] That is, do not advance so far as your affection would lead you. JOHNSON.

P. 20, l. 15. The *chariest* maid] *Chary* is cautious. STEEVENS.

P. 20, l. 31. And *recks not his own read.*] That is, heeds not his own lessons. POPE.

So, Sternhold, *Psalm*. i:

"—— that hath not lent

"To wicked *rede* his ear" BLACKSTONE.

P. 21, l. 4. *The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,*] This is a common sea phrase. STEEVENS.

P. 21, l. 9. — *character.*] i. e. write; strongly infix. MALONE.

P. 21, l. 13. *Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;*] The old copies read — with *hoops* of steel. I have no doubt that this was a corruption in the original quarto of 1604, arising, like many others, from similitude of sounds. The emendation, which was made by Mr. Pope, and adopted by three subsequent editors, is strongly supported by the word *grapple*; which is an instrument with several *hooks* to lay hold of a ship in order to board it.

It may be also observed, that *hooks* are sometimes made of steel, but *hoops* never. MALONE.

P. 21, l. 14. 15. But do not dull thy palm
with entertainment

Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade.]
The literal sense is, *Do not make thy palm callous by shaking every man by the hand.* The figurative meaning may be, *Do not by promiscuous conversation make thy mind insensible to the difference of characters.* JOHNSON.

P. 21, l. 19. *Take each man's censure,]* *Censure* is opinion. So in *King Henry VI.* P. II.

"The King is old enough to give his *censure*."

STEEVENS.

P. 21, l. 23. 24. *And they in France, of the
best rank and station,
Are most select and generous, chief in that.]*
I think the whole design of the precept shows we should read:

*Are most select, and generous chief, in
that.*

Chief may be an adjective used adverbially, a practice common to our author: *chiefly* generous. Yet it must be owned that the punctuation recommended is very stiff and harsh.

I would, however, more willingly read:

*And they in France, of the best rank and
station,*

*Select and generous, are most choice in
that.*

Let the reader, who can discover the slightest approach towards sense, harmony, or metre, in the original line, —

*Are of a most select and generous chief, in
that. —*

adhere to the old copies. STEEVENS.

The genuine meaning of the passage requires us to point the line thus:

"Are most select and generous, chief in that." i. e. the nobility of France are select and generous above all other nations, and chiefly in the point of apparel; the richness and elegance of their dress. RITSON.

The substantive *chief*, which signifies in heraldry the upper part of the shield, appears to have been in common use in Shakspeare's time, and the meaning seems to be, *They in France approve themselves of a most select and generous escutcheon by their dress. Generous is used with the signification of generosus. So, in Othello: The generous islanders,*" &c.

Chief, however, may have been used as a substantive, for *note* or *estimation*, without any allusion to heraldry, though the word was perhaps originally *heraldick*.

Our poet from various passages in his works, appears to have been accurately acquainted with all the terms of heraldry. MALONE.

P. 21, l. 27. — the edge of *husbandry*.] i. e. of thrift; oeconomical prudence. MALONE.

P. 21, l. 31. — *my blessing season this in thee!*] Season, for *infuse*. WARBURTON.

It is more than to *infuse*, it is to infix it in such a manner as that it never may wear out.

JOHNSON.

P. 21, last but one l. — your servants *tend*.] i. e. your servants are waiting for you. JOHNSON.

P. 22, l. 2. 3. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.]
The meaning is, that your counsels are as sure of

remaining locked up in my memory, as if yourself carried the key of it. STEEVENS.

P. 22, l. 23. Unsifted *in such perilous circumstance,*} Unsifted for *untried*. *Untried* signifies either not *tempted*, or not *refined*; *unsifted* signifies the *latter* only, though the sense requires the *former*.

WARBURTON.

It means, I believe, one who has not sufficiently considered, or thoroughly sifted such matters.

M. MASON.

I do not think that the sense requires us to understand *untempted*. "Unsifted in," &c. means, I think, one who has not nicely *canvassed* and examined the peril of her situation. MALONE.

P. 22, l. 30-33. — *Tender yourself more dearly;*

Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase, Wronging it thus,) you'll tender me a fool.]

The *parenthesis* is closed at the wrong place; and we must have likewise a slight correction in the last verse. [*Wringing* it, &c.] Polonius is racking and playing on the word *tender*, till he thinks proper to correct himself for the licence; and then he would say — not farther to crack the wind of the phrase, by *twisting* it and *contorting* it, as I have done. WARBURTON.

I believe, the word *wronging* has reference, not to the phrase, but to Ophelia; if you go on *wronging it thus*, that is, *if you continue to go on thus wrong*. This is a mode of speaking perhaps not very grammatical, but very common: nor have the best writers refused it:

"To sinner it or saint it,"
is in Pope. And Rowe,

“—— Thus to coy it,
“With one who knows you too.”

The folio has it— *Roaming* it thus. That is, *letting yourself loose to such improper liberty*. But wronging seems to be more proper. JOHNSON.

P. 22, last l. & P. 23, first l. Oph. *My Lord, he hath importun'd me with love, In honourable fashion.*

Pol. *Ay, fashion you may call it;]* She uses *fashion* for *manner*, and he for a *transient practice*. JOHNSON.

P. 23, l. 5. — *springes to catch woodcocks.*] A proverbial saying, “Every woman has a *springe to catch a woodcock*.” STEEVENS.

P. 23, l. 8. *Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,]* Some epithet to *blazes* was probably omitted, by the carelessness of the transcriber or compositor, in the first quarto, in consequence of which the metre is defective. MALONE.

P. 23, l. 13. *Set your entreatments at a higher rate,]* *Entreatments* here mean *company, conversation*, from the French *entretien*. JOHNSON.

Entreatments, I rather think, means the objects of *entreaty*; the favours for which lovers sue. MALONE.

P. 23, l. 16. — *tether*—] A string to tie horses. POPE.

Tether is that string by which an animal, set to graze in grounds uninclosed, is confined within the proper limits. JOHNSON.

Tether is a string by which any animal is fastened, whether for the sake of feeding or the air. STEEVENS.

P. 23, l. 18. A *broker* in old English meant a *bawd* or *pimp*. MALONE.

P. 23, l. 18-22. *Do not believe his vows:
for they are brokers*

*Not of that die which their investments
show,*

*But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,
The better to beguile.]* On which the editor,

Mr. Theobald, remarks, *Though all the editors have swallowed this reading implicitly, it is certainly corrupt; and I have been surprized how men of genius and learning could let it pass without some suspicion. What idea can we frame to ourselves of a breathing bond, or of its being sanctified and pious, &c.* But he was too hasty in framing ideas before he understood those already framed by the poet, and expressed in very plain words. Do not believe (says Polonius to his daughter) Hamlet's amorous vows made *to you*; which pretend religion in them (*the better to beguile*) like those sanctified and pious vows [*or bonds*] made *to heaven*. And why should not this pass without suspicion?

WARBURTON.

Theobald for *bonds* substitutes *bawds*. JOHNSON.

Notwithstanding Warburton's elaborate explanation of this passage, I have not the least doubt but Theobald is right, and that we ought to read *bawds* instead of *bonds*. Indeed the present reading is little better than nonsense.

Polonius had called Hamlet's vows, *brokers*, but two lines before, a synonymous word to *bawds*, and the very title that Shakspeare gives to Pandarus, in his *Troilus and Cressida*. The words *implorators of unholy suits*, are an exact description

tion of a *bawd*; and all such of them as are crafty in their trade, put on the appearance of sanctity, and are not of that die which their investments shew." M. MASON.

The old reading is indoubtedly the true one. Do not, says Polonius, believe his vows, for they are merely uttered for the purpose of persuading you to yield to a criminal passion, though they appear only the genuine effusion of a pure and lawful affection, and assume the semblance of those sacred engagements entered into at the altar of wedlock. The *bonds* here in our poet's thoughts were *bonds of love*.

Dr. Warburton certainly misunderstood this passage, and when he triumphantly asks "why may not this pass without suspicion?" if he means his own comment, the answer is, because it is not perfectly accurate. MALONE.

P. 23, l. 23-25. *I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth, Have you so slander any moment's leisure, As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet.]* Polonius says, *in plain terms*, that is, not in language less elevated or embellished than before, but *in terms that cannot be misunderstood: I would not have you so disgrace your most idle moments, as not to find better employment for them than lord Hamlet's conversation.* JOHNSON.

P. 23, last l. — *an eager air.]* That is, a sharp air, *aigre*, Fr. MALONE.

P. 24, l. 11. — *and takes his rouse,]* A *rouse* is a large dose of liquor, a debauch. STEEVENS.

P. 24, l. 12. — *the swaggering up-spring reels:]* The blustering upstart. JOHNSON.

P. 24, l. 21. 22. This heavy-headed revel, east
and west,

Makes us traduc'd, and tax'd of other nations :]
*This heavy-headed revel makes us traduced east
and west, and taxed of other nations.* JOHNSON.

By *east and west*, as Mr. Edwards has observed,
is meant, throughout the world ; *from one end of
it to the other.* MALONE.

P. 24, l. 23. They clepe us, *drunkards*,] And
well our Englishmen might ; for in Q. Elizabeth's
time there was a *Dane* in London, of whom the
following mention is made in a collection of cha-
racters entitled *Looke to it, for Ile stab ye*, no
date :

"You that will drinke *Keynaldo* unto death,
"The *Dane* that would carowse out of his
boote."

Mr. M. Mason adds, that "it appears from one
of Howell's letters dated at Hamburgh in the year
1632, that the then King of Denmark had not
degenerated from his jovial predecessor. — In his
account of an entertainment given by his Majesty
to the Earl of Leicester, he tells us, that the King
after beginning thirty-five toasts, was carried away
in his chair, and that all the officers of the court
were drunk." STEEVENS.

See also the *Nugae Antiquae*, Vol. II. p. 155,
for the scene of drunkenness introduced into the
court of James I. by the King of Denmark, in
1606. REED.

P. 24, l. 27. *The pith and marrow of our
attribute.*] The best
and most valuable part of the praise that would
be otherwise attributed to us. JOHNSON.

P. 24, l. 32. — *complexion,*] i. e. humour; as sanguine, melancholy, phlegmatick, &c.

WARBURTON.

P. 24, l. 34. 35. — *that too much o'er-leavens*

The form of plausible manners;] That intermingles too much with their manners; infects and corrupts them. *Plausible* in our poet's age signified gracious, pleasing, popular.

Plausible, in which sense *plausible* is here used, is defined by Cawdrey in his *Alphabetical Table*, &c. 1604, "*Pleasing*, or received joyfully and willingly." MALONE.

P. 25, first l. Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,] The word *star* in the text signifies a *scar* of that appearance. It is a term of *farriery*: the *white star* or mark so common on the forehead of a dark coloured horse, is usually produced by making a *scar* on the place. RITSON.

Some accidental blemish, the consequence of *the overgrowth of some complexion* or humour allotted to us by fortune at our birth, or some vicious habit accidentally acquired afterwards.

Theobald, plausibly enough, would read — fortune's *scar*. MALONE.

P. 25, l. 3. *As infinite as man may undergo,*] As large as can be accumulated upon man.

JOHNSON.

P. 25, l. 5-7. — *The dram of base*

Doth all the noble substance often dout,
To his own scandal.] I once proposed to read — *Doth all the noble substance* (i. e. the sum of good qualities) *oft do out*. We should now say, — *To its own scandal*; but *his* and *its* are perpetually confounded in the old copies.

As I understand the passage, there is little difficulty in it. This is one of the phrases which at present are neither employed in writing, nor perhaps are reconcileable to propriety of language.

To *do a thing out*, is to *extinguish it*, or to *efface* or *obliterate any thing pointed or written*.

In the first of these significations it is used by Drayton, in the 5th Canto of his *Baron's Wars*:

"Was ta'en in battle, and his eyes *out-done*.

My conjecture — *do out*, instead of *doubt*, might have received support from the pronunciation of this verb in Warwickshire, where they always say — "*dout* the candle," — "*dout* the fire;" i. e. put out or extinguish them. The forfex by which a candle is extinguished is also there called — *a douter*.

Dout, however, is a word formed by the coalescence of two others, (*do* and *out*) like *don* for *do on*, *doff* for *do off*, both of which are used by Shakspeare.

The word in question (and with the same blunder in spelling) has already occurred in the ancient copies of *Henry V*:

"—— make incision in their hides,

"That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,

"And *doubt* them with superfluous courage:" i. e. *put* or *do* them *out*. I therefore now think we should read:

Doth all the noble substance often dout, &c. for surely it is needless to say —

— *the noble substance of worth dout*, because the idea of *worth* is comprehended in the epithet — *noble*.

N. B. The improvement which my former note on this passage has received, I owed, about four years ago, to the late Rev. Henry Homer, a native of Warwickshire. But as Mr. Malone appears to have been furnished with almost the same intelligence, I shall not suppress his mode of communicating it, as he may fairly plead priority in having laid it before the publick. This is the sole cause why our readers are here presented with two annotations, of almost similar tendency, on the same subject: for unwilling as I am to withhold justice from a dead friend, I should with equal reluctance defraud a living critick of his due. STEEVENS.

The quarto, where alone this passage is found, exhibits is thus:

—— *the dram of eale*

*Doth all the noble substance of a doubt,
To his own scandal.*

To *dout*, as I have already observed in a note on *King Henry V.* signified in Shakspeare's time, and yet signifies in Devonshire and other western counties, to *do out*, to efface, to extinguish. Thus they say, "*dout the candle*," — "*dout the fire*," &c. It is exactly formed in the same manner as to *don* (or *do on*) which occurs so often in the writings of our poet and his contemporaries.

I have no doubt that the corruption of the text arose in the following manner. *Dout*, which I have now printed in the text, having been written by the mistake of the transcriber, *doubt*, and the word *worth* having been inadvertently omitted, the line, in the copy that went to the press stood,

Doth all the noble substance of doubt,——.

The editor or printer of the quarto copy, finding the line too short, and thinking *doubt* must

want an article, inserted it, without attending to the context; and instead of correcting the erroneous, and supplying the true word, printed—

Doth all the noble substance of a doubt, &c.

The very same error has happened in *King Henry V*:

“That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,

“And *doubt* them with superfluous courage: where *doubt* is again printed instead of *dout*.

That *worth* (which was supplied first by Mr. Theobald) was the word omitted originally in the hurry of transcription, may be fairly collected from a passage in *Cymbeline*, which fully justifies the correction made:

“————— Is she with Posthumus?

“From whose so many weights of *baseness* cannot

“A *dram* of *worth* be drawn.”

This passage also adds support to the correction of the word *eal* in the first of these lines, which was likewise made by Mr. Theobald. — *Base* is used substantively for *baseness*: a practice not uncommon in Shakspeare. So, in *Measure for Measure*:

“Say what thou canst, my *false* outweighs your *true*.”

Shakspeare, however, might have written — The *dram* of *ill*. This is nearer the corrupted word *eale*, but the passage in *Cymbeline* is in favour of the other emendation.

The meaning of the passage thus corrected is; the smallest particle of vice so blemishes the whole mass of virtue, as to erase from the minds of mankind the recollection of the numerous good qualities possessed by him who is thus blemished

by a single stain, and taints his general character.

To his own scandal, means so as to reduce the whole mass of worth to its own vicious and unsightly appearance; to translate his virtue to the likeness of vice.

His for its is so common in Shakspeare, that every play furnishes with examples. MALONE.

P. 25, l. 10 - 13. Ham. *Angels and ministers of grace defend us!*

Be thou a spirit of health, &c.] Hamlet's speech to the apparition of his father seems to consist of three parts. When first he sees the spectre, he fortifies himself with an invocation:

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
As the spectre approaches, he deliberates with himself, and determines, that whatever it be he will venture to address it:

Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,

Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,

*Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee, &c.*

This he says while his father is advancing; he then, as he had determined, speaks to him, and calls him — Hamlet, King, Father, Royal Dane: O! answer me. JOHNSON.

P. 25, l. 16. *Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,]* By questionable is meant provoking question. HANMER.

Questionable, I believe, means only propitious to conversation, easy and willing to be conversed with. So, in *As you like it*: "An unquestionable spirit, which you have not." Un-

questionable in this last instance certainly signifies *unwilling to be talked with*. STEEVENS.

Questionable perhaps only means *capable of being conversed with*. *To question*, certainly in our author's time signified *to converse*.

MALONE.

P. 25, l. 20 - 24. *Why thy canoniz'd bones,
hearsed in death,*

Have burst their cerements! why the sepulchre,

Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,

Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,

To cast thee up again!] Hamlet, amazed

at an apparition, which, though in all ages credited, has in all ages been considered as the most wonderful and most dreadful operation of supernatural agency, enquires of the spectre, in the most emphatick terms, why he breaks the order of nature, by returning from the dead; this he asks in a very confused circumlocution, confounding in his fright the soul and body. Why, says he, *have thy bones*, which with due ceremonies have been entombed *in death*, in the common state of departed mortals, *burst* the folds in which they were embalmed? Why has the tomb, in which we saw thee quietly laid, opened his mouth, that mouth which, by its weight and stability, seemed closed for ever? The whole sentence is this: *Why dost thou appear, whom we know to be dead?*

JOHNSON.

By the expression *hearsed in death* is meant, shut up and secured with all those precautions which are usually practised in preparing dead bodies for sepulture, such as the winding-sheet, shroud, coffin, &c. perhaps embalming into the bargain. So that *death* is here used, by a me-

tonymy of the antecedent for the consequents, for the rites of death, such as are generally esteemed due, and practised with regard to dead bodies. Consequently, I understand by *cerements*, the waxed winding-sheet or winding-sheets, in which the corpse was enclosed and sown up, in order to preserve it the longer from external impressions, from the humidity of the sepulchre, as embalming was intended to preserve it from internal corruption. HEATH.

By *hearsed in death*, the poet seems to mean, *reposed and confined in the place of the dead*. MALONE.

P. 25, l. 25. — *in complete steel,*] It is probable that Shakspeare introduced his ghost in armour, that it might appear more solemn by such a discrimination from the other characters; though it was really the custom of the Danish Kings to be buried in that manner. Vide *Olaus Wormius*, cap. vii. “*Struem regi nec vestibus, nec odoribus cumulant, sua cuique arma, quorundam igni et equus adjicitur.*” STEEVENS.

P. 25, l. 26 – 29. Making night hideous: and
we fools of nature,
So horridly to shake our disposition,
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our
souls?] *Fools of nature*, — The expression is fine, as intimating we were only kept (as, formerly, fools in a great family,) to make sport for nature, who lay hid only to mock and laugh at us, for our vain searches into her mysteries. WARBURTON.

Making us, who are the sport of nature, whose mysterious operations are beyond the reaches of our souls, &c. MALONE.

Disposition for frame. WARBURTON.

P. 26, first l. — *a more removed ground:]*
i. e. *remote*. STEEVENS.

P. 26, l. 7. — *pin's fee;]* The value of a pin.
JOHNSON.

P. 26, l. 14. *That beetles o'er his base]* That hangs o'er his base, like what is called a *beetle-brow*. This verb is, I believe, of our author's coinage. MALONE.

P. 26, l. 16. — *deprive your sovereignty of reason,]* your ruling power of reason. When poets wish to invest any quality or virtue with uncommon splendor, they do it by some allusion to regal eminence. Thus, among the excellencies of Banquo's character, our author distinguishes "*his royalty of nature*," i. e. his natural *superiority* over others, his independent dignity of mind. I have selected this instance to explain the former, because I am told that "*royalty of nature*" has been idly supposed to bear some allusion to Banquo's distant prospect of the crown.

To *deprive* your sovereignty of reason, therefore, does not signify *to deprive your princely mind of rational powers*, but, *to take away from you the command of reason, by which man is governed*.

Dr. Warburton would read *deprave*; but several proofs are given in a note to *King Lear*, of Shakspeare's use of the word *deprive*, which is the true reading. STEEVENS.

I believe, *deprive* in this place signifies simply *to take away*. JOHNSON.

P. 26, l. 18. *The very place puts toys of desperation,]* Toys, for *whims*. WARBURTON.

P. 26, l. 33. — *I'll make a ghost of him that lets me:]* To let among

our old authors signifies to prevent, to hinder. It is still a word current in the law, and to be found in almost all leases. STEEVENS.

P. 27, l. 7. *Heaven will direct it.*] Perhaps it may be more apposite to read "Heaven will *detect* it." FARMER.

Marcellus answers Horatio's question, "To what issue will this come?" and Horatio also answers it himself with a pious resignation, "Heaven will *direct* it." BLACKSTONE.

P. 27, l. 29. *And, for the day, confin'd to fast in fires,*] Chaucer has a similar passage with regard to the punishments of hell, *Parson's Tale*, p. 193, Mr. Urry's edition: "And moreover the misese of hell, shall be in defaute of mete and drinke." SMITH.

Nash, in his *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devil*, 1595, has the same idea: "Whether it be a place of horror, stench and darkness, where men *see meat, but can get none*, and are ever thirsty," &c. Before I had read the *Persones Tale* of Chaucer, I supposed that he meant rather to drop a stroke of satire on sacerdotal luxury, than to give a serious account of the place of future torment. Chaucer, however, is as grave as Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

This passage requires no amendment. As spirits were supposed to feel the same desires and appetites that they had on earth, to *fast* might be considered as one of the punishments inflicted on the wicked. M. MASON.

P. 27, l. 28. 29. *Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature, Are burnt and purg'd away.*] Gawin Douglas really changes the Platonic hell into the "pnytion of saulis in purgatory:" and it is observe-

able, that when the ghost informs Hamlet of his doom there,

"Till the foul crimes done in his days of nature

"Are burnt and purg'd away, —"

The expression is very similar to the Bishop's. I will give you his version as concisely as I can:

"It is a nedeful thyng to suffer painis and torment; — Sum in the wyndis, sum under the water, and in the fire uthir sum: thus the mony vices —

"Contrakkit in the corporis be done away

"And purgit." — Sixte Book of Eneados, fol. p. 191. FARMER.

Shakspeare talks more like a Papist, than a Platonist; but the language of Bishop Douglas is that of a good Protestant:

"Thus the mony vices

"Contrakkit in the corporis be done away

"And purgit."

These are the very words of our Liturgy, in the commendatory prayer for a sick person at the point of departure, in the office for the visitation of the sick; — *"Whatsoever defilements it may have contracted — being purged and done away."*

WHALLEY.

P. 28, l. 13. [Ghost. *Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.*]

As a proof that this play was written before 1597, of which the contrary has been asserted by Mr. Holt in Dr. Johnson's Appendix, I must borrow, as usual, from Dr. Farmer: "Shakspeare is said to have been no extraordinary actor; and that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet*. Yet this *chef d'oeuvre* did not please: I will give you an original stroke at it. Dr. Lodge

published in the year 1596, a pamphlet called *Wit's Miserie, or the World's Madness, discovering the incarnate Devils of the Age*, quarto. One of these devils is, *Hate-virtue, or sorrow for another man's good successe*, who, says the doctor, is *a foule lubber*, and looks as pale as the vizard of the *Ghost*, which cried so miserably at the theatre, *Hamlet revenge.*" STEEVENS.

I suspect that this stroke was levelled not at Shakspeare, but at the performer of the Ghost in an older play on this subject, exhibited before 1589. See *An Attempt to ascertain the order of Shakspeare's Plays.* MALONE.

P. 28, l. 18-21. — *that I, with wings as swift*

As meditation, or the thoughts of love,

May sweep to my revenge.] This similitude is extremely beautiful. The word *meditation* is consecrated, by the *mysticks*, to signify that stretch and flight of mind which aspires to the enjoyment of the supreme good. So that Hamlet, considering with what to compare the swiftness of his revenge, chooses two of the most rapid things in nature, the ardency of divine and human passion, in an *enthusiast* and a *lover*. WARBURTON.

The comment on the word *meditation* is so ingenious, that I hope it is just. JOHNSON.

P. 28, l. 23, 24. And duller should'st thou be
than the fat weed

That rots itself in ease on *Lethe wharf*,] Shakspeare, apparently through ignorance, makes Roman Catholicks of these Pagan Dæmons; and here gives a description of purgatory; but yet mixes it with the Pagan fable of *Lethe's wharf*. Whether he did it to insinuate to the zealous Protestants of his time, that the Pagan and Popish purgatory stood both upon the same footing of credibility, or

whether it was by the same kind of licentious inadvertence that Michael Angelo brought Charon's bark into his picture of the Last Judgement, is not easy to decide. WARBURTON.

P. 29, l. 17. *Orchard* for *garden*. STEEVENS.

P. 29, l. 20. — *hebenon* —] The word here used was more probably designed by a *metathesis*, either of the poet or transcriber, for *henebon*, that is, *henbane*; of which the most common kind (*hyoscyamus niger*) is certainly *narcotick*, and perhaps, if taken in a considerable quantity, might prove poisonous. Galen calls it cold in the third degree; by which in this, as well as *opium*, he seems not to mean an actual coldness, but the power it has of benumbing the faculties. Dioscorides ascribes to it the property of producing madness. These qualities have been confirmed by several cases related in modern observations. In Wepfer we have a good account of the various effects of this root upon most of the members of a *convent* in Germany, who eat of it for supper by mistake, mixed with succory; — heat in the throat, giddiness, dimness of sight, and delirium. *Cicut. Aquatic.* c. xviii. GREY.

P. 29, l. 21 22. And in the porches of mine
ears did pour

The leperous *distilment*;] So, in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, Vol. II. p. 142: "—— which being once possessed, never leaveth the patient till it hath enfeebled his state, like the quality of *poison distilling* through the veins even to the heart. MALONE.

Surely the leperous *distilment* signifies the water *distilled* from henbane, that subsequently occasioned leprosy. STEEVENS.

P. 29, l. 33. *Despatch'd, for bereft.*

WAREURTON.

P. 29, l. 34. *Cut off even in the blossoms of
my sin,]* The very

words of this part of the speech are taken (as I have been informed by a gentleman of undoubted veracity) from an old *Legend of Saints*, where a man, who was accidentally drowned, is introduced as making the same complaint. STEEVENS.

P. 29, last but one l. *Unhousel'd, disappoint-
ed, unanel'd:]* Un-

housel'd is without having received the sacrament.

Disappointed, as Dr. Johnson observes, "is the same as *unappointed*, and may be properly explained *unprepared*. A man well furnished with things necessary for an enterprise, was said to be well *appointed*."

This explanation of *disappointed* may be countenanced by a quotation of Mr. Upton's from *Measure for Measure*:

"Therefore your best *appointment* make
with speed."

Isabella, as Mr. Malone remarks, is the speaker, and her brother, who was condemned to die, is the person addressed.

Unanel'd is without extreme unction.

I shall now subjoin as many notes as are necessary for the support of the first and third of these explanations. I administer the bark only, not supposing any reader will be found who is desirous to swallow the whole tree.

In the *Textus Roffensis* we meet with two of these words — "The monks offering themselves to perform all priestly functions of *houceling*, and *aveyling*." *Aveyling* is misprinted for *aneyling*.

STEEVENS.

See *Mort d' Arthur*, p. iii. c. 175: "So when he was *houseled* and *aneled*, and had all that a Christian man ought to have," &c. TYRWHITT.

The subsequent extract from a very scarce and curious copy of Fabian's Chronicle, printed by Pynson, 1516, seems to remove every possibility of doubt concerning the true signification of the words *unhousel'd* and *unanel'd*. The historian speaking of Pope Innocent's having laid the whole kingdom of England under an interdict, has these words: "Of the manner of this interdiccion of this lande have I seen dyverse opynyons, as some ther be that saye that the lande was interdyted thorwly and the churchis and housys of relygyon closyd, that no where was used mase, nor dyvyne servyce, by whiche reason none of the VII sacramentis all this terme should be mynystred or occupied, nor chylde *crystened*, nor man *confessed* nor *marryed*; but it was not so strayght. For there were dyverse placys in Englonde, which were occupied with dyvyne servyce all that season by lycence purchased than or before, also chyldren were chrystenyd throughe all the lande and men *houselfyd* and *anelyd*. Fol. 14. Septima Pars Johannis."

The Anglo-Saxon noun-substantives *husel*, (the eucharist) and *ele* (oil) are plainly the roots of these last quoted compound adjectives—. For the meaning of the affix *an* to the last, I quote Spelman's Gloss. in loco: "Quin & dictionibus (an) adjungitur, siquidem vel *majoris notationis gratia*, vel ad *singulare aliquid*, vel *unicum demonstrandum*." Hence *anelyd* should seem to signify *oiled* or *anointed* by way of eminence, i. e. having received extreme unction. For the confirmation of the sense given here, there is the
strongest

strongest internal evidence in the passage. The historian is speaking of the VII sacraments, and he expressly names five of them, viz. baptism, marriage, auricular confession, the *eucharist*, and *extreme unction*.

The antiquary is desired to consult the edition of Fabian, printed by Pynson, 1516, because there are others, and I remember to have seen one in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, with a continuation to the end of Queen Mary, London, 1559, in which the language is much modernized.

BRAND.

P. 30, l. 2. *O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!*] It was ingeniously hinted to me by a very learned lady, that this line seems to belong to Hamlet, in whose mouth it is a proper and natural exclamation; and who, according to the practice of the stage, may be supposed to interrupt so long a speech.

JOHNSON.

P. 30, l. 5. *A couch for luxury —*] i. e. for *lewdness*. STEEVENS.

P. 30, l. 12. And 'gins to *pale his uneffectual fire*:] i. e. shining without heat. WARBURTON.

To *pale* is a verb used by Lady Elizabeth Carew, in her *Tragedy of Mariam*, 1613.

Uneffectual fire, I believe, rather means, fire that is no longer seen when the light of morning approaches. STEEVENS.

P. 30, l. 16. — *O fie!* —] These words (which hurt the measure, and from that circumstance, and their almost ludicrous turn, may be suspected as an interpolation,) are found only in the two earliest quartos. STEEVENS.

P. 30, l. 21. *In this distracted globe.] i. e. in this head confused with thought.* STEEVENS.

P. 30, l. 31. 32. *My tables, — meet it is, I set it down,*

That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;] This is a ri-

dicule on the practice of the time. Hall says, in his character of the *Hypocrite* "He will ever sit where he may be seene best, and in the midst of the sermon pulles, out his *tables* in haste, as if he feared to loose that note," &c. FARMER.

No ridicule on the practice of the time could with propriety be introduced on this occasion. Hamlet avails himself of the same caution observed by the doctor in the fifth act of *Macbeth*: "I will set down whatever comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly."

"Dr. Farmer's remark, however, as to the frequent use of table-books, may be supported by many instances. STEEVENS.

Table-books in the time of our author appear to have been used by all ranks of people. In the church they were filled with short notes of the sermon, and at the theatre with the sparkling sentences of the play. MALONE.

P. 30, last l. — Now to my word;

It is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me.]* Hamlet alludes to the *watch-word* given every day in military service, which at this time he says is *Adieu, adieu! remember me.* STEEVENS.

P. 31, l. 7. *Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come]* This is the call

which falconers use to their hawks in the air, when they would have him come down to them.

HANMER.

P. 32, l. 6. — *by saint Patrick,*] How the poet comes to make Hamlet swear by *St. Patrick*, I know not. However, at this time all the whole northern world had their learning from Ireland; to which place it had retired, and there flourished under the auspices of this Saint. But it was, I suppose, only said at random; for he makes Hamlet a student of Wittenberg. WARBURTON.

Dean Swift's "Verses on the sudden drying-up of St. Patrick's Well, 1726," contain many learned allusions to the early cultivation of literature in Ireland. NICHOLS.

P. 32, last but one l. *Swear by my sword.*] Here the poet has preserved the manners of the ancient Danes, with whom it was *religion* to swear upon their swords. See *Bartholinus, De causis contempt. mort. apud Dan.* WARBURTON.

I was once inclinable to this opinion, which is likewise well defended by Mr. Upton; but Mr. Garrick produced me a passage, I think, in *Bran-tome*, from which it appeared, that it was common to swear upon the sword, that is, upon the cross which the old swords always had upon the hilt. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare, it is more than probable, knew nothing of the ancient Danes, or their manners. Every extract from Dr. Farmer's pamphlet must prove as instructive to the reader as the following:

"In the *Passus Primus* of *Pierce Plowman*,

'David in his daies dubbed knightes,

'And did them *swere on her sword* to
serve truth ever.'

"And in *Hieronymo* the common butt of our author, and the wits of the time, says Lorenzo to Pedringano:

‘Swear on this cross, that what thou say’st is true :

‘But if I prove thee perjur’d and unjust,

‘This very sword, whereon thou took’st thine oath,

‘Shall be a worker of thy tragedy.’”

To the authorities produced by Dr. Farmer, the following amongst many others, may be added from *Holinshed*, p. 664: “Warwick kissed the cross of K. Edward’s sword, as it were a vow to his promise.”

Again in an ancient MS. of which some account is given in a note on the first scene of the first act of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the oath taken by a *master of defence* when his degree was conferred on him, is preserved, and runs as follows: “First you shall swear (so help you God and halidome, and by all the christendome which God gave you at the fount-stone, and by the *crosse* of this sword which doth represent unto you the *crosse* which our Saviour sufered his most payneful deathe upon,) that you shal upholde, maynteyne, and kepe to your power all soch articles as shall be heare declared unto you, and receve in the presence of me your maister, and these the rest of the maisters my bretheren heare with me at this tyme.” STEEVENS.

Spencer observes that the Irish in his time used commonly to swear by their sword. See his *View of the State of Ireland*, written in 1596. This custom, indeed, is of the highest antiquity; having prevailed as we learn from Lucian, among the Scythians. MALONE.

P. 33, l. 14. 15. *And therefore as a stranger*
give it welcome.] i. e.
 receive it to yourselves; take it under your own

roof; as much as to say, *Keep it secret*. Alluding to the laws of hospitality. WARBURTON.

Warburton refines too much on this passage. Hamlet means merely to request that they would seem not to know it—to be unacquainted with it.

M. MASON.

P. 33, l. 30. 31. Or *such ambiguous giving out*, to note

That you know aught of me:] The construction is irregular and elleptical. Swear as before, says Hamlet, that you never *shall* by folded arms or shaking of your head *intimate that a secret is lodged in your breasts*; and by no ambiguous phrases denote that you know aught of me.

Shakspeare has in many other places begun to construct a sentence in one form, and ended it in another. So, in *All's well that ends well*: “I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn, or the baring of my beard; and *to say it was in stratagem*.”

Having used the word *never* in the preceding part of the sentence, [that you *never* shall—] the poet considered the *negative* implied in what follows; and hence he wrote—“*or—to note*,” instead of *nor*. MALONE.

P. 33, l. 34. Ham. *Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! &c.*] The skill displayed in Shakspeare's management of his Ghost, is too considerable to be overlooked. He has rivetted our attention to it by a succession of forcible circumstances:—by the previous report of the terrified centinels,—by the solemnity of the hour at which the phantom walks,—by its martial stride and discriminating armour, visible only *per incertam lunam*, by the glimpses of the moon,—by its long taciturnity,—by its prepa-

ration to speak, when interrupted by the morning cock, — by its mysterious reserve throughout its first scene with Hamlet, — by his resolute departure with it, and the subsequent anxiety of his attendants, — by its conducting him to a solitary angle of the platform, — by its voice from beneath the earth, — and by its unexpected burst on us in the closet.

Hamlet's late interview with the spectre, must in particular be regarded as a stroke of dramatick artifice. The phantom might have told his story in the presence of the officers and Horatio, and yet have rendered itself as inaudible to them, as afterwards to the Queen. But suspense was our poet's object; and never was it more effectually created, than in the present instance. Six times has the royal semblance appeared, but till now has been withheld from speaking. For this event we have waited with impatient curiosity, unaccompanied by lassitude, or remitted attention.

The Ghost in this tragedy, is allowed to be the genuine product of Shakspeare's strong imagination. When he afterwards avails himself of traditional phantoms, as in *Julius Caesar*, and *King Richard III.* they are but inefficacious pageants; nay, the apparition of Banquo is a mute exhibitor. Perhaps our poet despaired to equal the vigour of his early conceptions on the subject of preternatural beings, and therefore allotted them no further eminence in his dramas; or was unwilling to diminish the power of his principal shade, by an injudicious repetition of congenial images. STEEVENS.

P. 34, l. 22. Inquire me first what *Danskers*
are in Paris;] *Danske*
(in Warner's *Albion's England*) is the ancient
name of Denmark. STEEVENS.

P. 35, l. 14 - 16. *Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,*

Drabbing:] I suppose, by *fencing* is meant a too diligent frequentation of the fencing-school, a resort of violent and lawless young men.

JOHNSON.

Fencing, I suppose, means, piquing himself on his skill in the use of the sword, and quarrelling and brawling in consequence of that skill.

MALONE.

P. 35, l. 20. *You must not put another scandal on him,*] Thus the old editions. Mr. Theobald reads, — *an utter*.

JOHNSON.

i. e. a very different and more scandalous failing, namely, habitual incontinency. Mr. Theobald in his *Shakspeare Restored* proposed to read — *an utter scandal* on him; but did not admit the emendation into his edition. MALONE.

P. 35, l. 22. *That's not my meaning:*] That is not what I mean, when I permit you to accuse him of drabbing. M. MASON.

P. 35, l. 26. *Savageness, for wildness.*

WARBURTON.

P. 35, l. 27. *Of general assault.*] i. e. such as youth in general is liable to. WARBURTON.

P. 36, l. 2. — *prenominate crimes,*] i. e. crimes already named. STEEVENS.

P. 36, l. 5. *Good sir, or so; or friend, or gentleman,*] I suspect, (with Mr. Tyrwhitt,) that the poet wrote — *Good sir, or sir, or friend, &c.* In the last act of this play, *so* is used for *so forth*: “— six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hanger, and *so.*” MALONE.

P. 36. l. 33. *Observe his inclination in yourself.]* Sir T. Hamner reads, — *e'en* yourself, and is followed by Dr. Warburton; but perhaps *in* yourself means, *in your own person*, not by spies. JOHNSON.

The meaning seems to be — The temptations you feel, suspect in him, and be watchful of them. So, in a subsequent scene;

“For by the image of my cause, I see

“The portraiture of his.”

Again, in *Timon*;

“I weigh my friend's affection with my own.” C.

P. 37, l. 10. — *down-gyved* to his ancle;] *Down-gyved* means hanging down like the loose cincture which confines the fetters round the ancles.

STEEVENS.

P. 37, l. 28. — *all his bulk,*] i. e. all his body.

MALONE.

P. 38, l. 2. *Whose violent property fordoes itself,]* To *foredo* is to destroy. STEEVENS.

P. 38, l. 14. *I had not quoted him:]* To *quote* is, I believe, to *reckon*, to take an account of, to take the *quotient* or result of a computation. JOHNSON.

I find a passage in *The Isle of Gulls*, a comedy, by John Day, 1606, which proves Dr. Johnson's sense of the word to be not far from the true one:

“—— 'twill be a scene of mirth

“For me to *quote* his passions, and his smiles.”

To *quote* on this occasion undoubtedly means to *observe*.

Again, in the *The Woman Hater*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, the intelligencer says, — “I'll *quote*

him to a tittle," i. e. I will mark or observe him.

To *quote* as Mr. M. Mason observes, is invariably used by Shakspeare in this sense.

STEEVENS.

P. 38, l. 17 - 20. — *it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion.*]

This is not the remark of a weak man. The vice of age is too much suspicion. Men long accustomed to the wiles of life cast commonly *beyond themselves*, let their cunning go farther than reason can attend it. This is always the fault of a little mind, made artful by long commerce with the world. JOHNSON.

P. 38, l. 21 - 23. *This must be known; which,
being kept close might move
More grief to hide, than hate to utter love.*]

This must be made known to the King, for (being kept secret) the hiding Hamlet's love might occasion more mischief to us from him and the Queen, than the uttering or revealing of it will occasion hate and resentment from Hamlet. The poet's ill and obscure expression seems to have been caused by his affectation of concluding the scene with a couplet.

Sir T. Hanmer reads,

More grief to hide hate, than to utter love.

JOHNSON.

P. 39, l. 24. *Gentry, for complaisance,*

WARBURTON.

P. 39, l. 26. *For the supply and profit of
our hope,*]

That the hope which your arrival has raised may be completed by the desired effect. JOHNSON.

P. 39, l. 30. — *by the sovereign power you have of us,]* I believe we should read — *o'er us*, instead of — *of us*.

M. MASON.

P. 39, l. 34. — *in the full bent,]* *Bent*, for *endeavour, application*. WARBURTON.

The full bent, is the utmost extremity of exertion. The allusion is to a bow bent as far as it will go. MALONE.

P. 40, l. 24. 25. — *this brain of mine*

Hunts not the trail of policy] The trail is the course of an animal pursued by the scent.

JOHNSON.

P. 40, l. 30. — *the fruit—]* The desert after the meat. JOHNSON.

P. 41, l. 17. — *falsely borne in hand,]* i. e. deceived, imposed on. STEEVENS.

P. 41, l. 20. 21. — *never more*

To give the assay of arms against your Majesty.] To take the assay was a technical expression, originally applied to those who tasted wine for Princes and great men. MALONE.

P. 41, l. 23. Gives him *three thousand crowns in annual fee;]* This reading first obtained in the edition put out by the players. But all the old quartos (from 1605, downwards,) read *threescore*. THEOBALD.

The metre is destroyed by the alteration; and threescore thousand crowns, in the days of Hamlet, was an enormous sum of money. M. MASON.

Fee in this place signifies *reward, recompence*. The word is commonly used in Scotland, for *wages*, as we say *lawyer's fee, physician's fee*.

STEEVENS.

Fee is defined by Minsheu in his Dict. 1617, a reward. MALONE.

I have restored the reading of the folio. Mr. Ritson explains it, I think, rightly thus: the King gave his nephew a *feud* or *fee* (in land) of that yearly value. REED.

P. 42, l. 3. — *at night we'll feast together:]* The King's intemperance is never suffered to be forgotten. JOHNSON.

P. 42, l. 6. and fol. Pol. *This business is well ended.*

My Liege, and Madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, &c.] *To expostulate*, for *to enquire* or *discuss*.

The strokes of humour in this speech are admirable. Polonius's character is that of a weak, pendent, minister of state. His declamation is a fine satire on the impertinent oratory then in vogue, which placed reason in the formality of method, and wit in the gingle and play of words. With what art is he made to pride himself in his *wit*:

"That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true, 'tis pity:

"And pity 'tis, 'tis true: A foolish figure;
"But farewell it, —."

And how exquisitely does the poet ridicule the *reasoning in fashion*, where he makes Polonius remark on Hamlet's madness:

"Though this be madness, yet there's method in't:"

As if method, which the wits of that age thought the most essential quality of a good discourse, would make amends for the madness. It was *madness* indeed, yet Polonius could comfort himself with this reflection, that at least it was *method*. It is certain Shakspeare excels in nothing more

than in the preservation of his characters; *To this life and variety of character* (says our great poet [Pope] in his admirable preface to Shakspeare) *we must add the wonderful preservation.* We have said what is the character of Polonius; and it is allowed on all hands to be drawn with wonderful life and spirit, yet the *unity* of it has been thought by some to be grossly violated in the excellent *precepts and instructions* which Shakspeare makes his statesman give his son and servant in the middle of the *first*, and beginning of the *second act*. But I will venture to say, these criticks have not entered into the poet's art and address in this particular. He had a mind to ornament his scenes with those fine lessons of social life; but his Polonius was too weak to be author of them, though he was pedant enough to have met with them in his reading, and fop enough to get them by heart, and retail them for his own. And this the poet has finely shewn us was the case, where, in the middle of Polonius's instructions to his servant, he makes him, though without having received any interruption, forget his lesson, and say,

"And then, Sir, does he this;

"He does — What was I about to say?

"I was about to say something — where did I leave?"

The servant replies,

At, closes in the consequence. This sets Polonius right, and he goes on,

"*At* closes in the consequence,

"— *Ay* marry,

"*He* closes thus: — I know the gentleman," &c.

which shews the very words got by heart which he was repeating. Otherwise *closes in the con-*

sequence, which conveys no particular idea of the subject he was upon, could never have made him recollect where he broke off. This is an extraordinary instance of the poet's art, and attention to the preservation of character. WARBURTON.

This account of the character of Polonius, though it sufficiently reconciles the seeming inconsistency of so much wisdom with so much folly, does not perhaps correspond exactly to the ideas of our author. The commentator makes the character of Polonius, a character only of manners, discriminated by properties superficial, accidental, and acquired. The poet intended a nobler delineation of a mixed character of manners and nature. Polonius is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident in his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is truly represented as designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental, the rest is natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it is become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight. While he depends upon his memory, and can draw from his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel; but as the mind in its enfeebled state cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to sudden dereliction of his faculties, he loses the order of his ideas and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle, and falls again into his

former train. This idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom, will solve all the phaenomena of the character of Polonius. JOHNSON.

Nothing can be more just, judicious, and masterly, than Johnson's delineation of the character of Polonius; and I cannot read it without heartily regretting that he did not exert his great abilities and discriminating powers, in delineating the strange, inconsistent, and indecisive character of Hamlet, to which I confess myself unequal.

M. MASON.

P. 42, l. 33. The most *beautified* Ophelia,] Mr. Theobald for *beautified* substituted *beatified*.

MALONE.

Dr. Warburton has followed Mr. Theobald; but I am in doubt whether *beautified*, though, as Polonius calls it, a *vile phrase*, be not the proper word. *Beautified* seems to be a *vile phrase*, for the ambiguity of its meaning. JOHNSON.

Heywood, in his *History of Edward VI.* says "*Katherine Parre*, Queen dowager to King Henry VIII. was a woman *beautified* with many excellent virtues." FARMER.

By *beautified* Hamlet means *beautiful*. But Polonius, taking the word in the more strictly grammatical sense of *being made beautiful*, calls it a vile phrase, as implying that his daughter's beauty was the effect of art. M. MASON.

P. 43, l. 14. — *whilst this machine is to him.*] These words will not be ill explained by the conclusion of one of the *Letters of the Paston Family*, Vol. II. p. 43: "— for your pleasure, *whyle my wyttts be my owne.*"

The phrase employed by Hamlet seems to have a French construction. *Pendant que cette machine est à lui.* To be *one's own man* is a vul-

gar expression, but means much the same as Virgil's

Dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit artus. STEEVENS.

P. 43, l. 16. — *more above,*] is, moreover, besides. JOHNSON.

P. 43, l. 29 - 32. *If I had play'd the desk, or table-book;*

Or given my heart a working, mute and dumb;

Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;

What might you think?] If either I had conveyed intelligence between them, and been the confident of their amours [*play'd the desk or table-book,*] or had connived at it, only observed them in secret, without acquainting my daughter with my discovery [*giving my heart a mute and dumb working;*] or lastly, had been negligent in observing the intrigue, and overlooked it [*looked upon this love with idle sight;*] what would you have thought of me? WARBURTON.

I doubt whether the first line is rightly explained. It may mean, if I had lock'd up this secret in my own breast, as closely as if it were confined in a desk or table-book. MALONE.

P. 43, l. 32. — *I went round to work,*] i. e. roundly, without reserve. STEEVENS.

P. 44, l. 4. — *she took the fruits of my advice;*] She took the fruits of advice when she obeyed advice, the advice was then made fruitful. JOHNSON.

P. 44, l. 5 - 10. *And he, repulsed, (a short tale to make,)*

Fell into a sadness; then into a fast;

Thence to a watch; thence into a weakness;

Thence to a lightness; and, by this declension,

Into the madness wherein now he raves,

And all we mourn for.] The ridicule of this character is here admirably sustained. He would not only be thought to have discovered this intrigue by his own sagacity, but to have remarked all the stages of Hamlet's disorder, from his sadness to his raving, as regularly as his physician could have done; when all the while the madness was only feigned. The humour of this is exquisite from a man who tells us, with a confidence peculiar to small politicians, that he could find

"Where truth was hid, though it were hid indeed

"Within the centre." WARBURTON.

P. 44, l. 24. 25. — *sometimes he walks four hours together,]* Perhaps it would be better were we to read indefinitely,

— *for hours together.* TYRWHITT.

I formerly was inclined to adopt Mr. Tyrwhitt's proposed emendation; but have now no doubt that the text is right. The expression, *four hours together, two hours together, &c.* appears to have been common. MALONE.

P. 45, l. 5. *I'll board him]* i. e. accost, address him. REED.

P. 45, l. 18. 19. Ham. *For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god, kissing carrion —]* Old copies — a good kissing carrion. The editors seeing Hamlet counterfeit madness, thought they might safely put any nonsense into his mouth. But this strange passage, when set right, will be seen to contain as great and sublime a reflection as any the poet puts into his hero's

hero's mouth throughout the whole play. We will first give the true reading, which is this: *For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god, kissing carrion, ——. As to the sense we may observe, that the illative particle [for] shows the speaker to be reasoning from something he had said before: what that was we learn in these words, to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one picked out of ten thousand.* Having said this, the chain of ideas led him to reflect upon the argument which libertines bring against Providence from the circumstance of abounding evil. In the next speech therefore he endeavours to answer that objection, and vindicate Providence, even on a supposition of the fact, that almost all men were wicked. His argument in the two lines in question is to this purpose, — *But why need we wonder at this abounding of evil? For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, which though a god, yet shedding its heat and influence upon carrion* — Here he stops short, lest talking too consequentially the hearer should suspect his madness to be feigned; and so turns him off from the subject, by enquiring of his daughter. But the inference which he intended to make, was a very noble one, and to this purpose. If this, (says he) be the case, that the effect follows the thing operated upon [*carrion*] and not the thing operating [*a god,*] why need we wonder, that the supreme cause of all shings diffusing its blessings on mankind, who is, as it were, a dead carrion, dead in original sin, man, instead of a proper return of duty, should breed only corruption and vices? This is the argument at length; and is as noble a one in behalf of Providence as could come from the schools of divinity. But this wonderful man

had an art not only of acquainting the audience with what his actors *say*, but with what they *think*. The sentiment too is altogether in character, for Hamlet is perpetually moralizing, and his circumstances make this reflection very natural. The same *thought*, something diversified, as on a different occasion, he uses again in *Measure for Measure*, which will serve to confirm these observations:

“The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?

“Not she; nor doth she tempt; but it is I

“That lying by the violet in the sun,

“Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,

“Corrupt by virtuous season.”

And the same kind of *expression* is in *Cymbeline*:

“Common-kissing Titan.” WARBURTON.

This is a noble emendation, which almost sets the critick on a level with the author. JOHNSON.

Dr. Warburton, in my apprehension, did not understand the passage. I have therefore omitted his laboured comment on it, in which he endeavours to prove that Shakspeare intended it as a vindication of the ways of Providence in permitting evil to abound in the world. He does not indeed pretend that this profound meaning can be drawn from what Hamlet *says*; but that this is what he was *thinking of*; for “this wonderful man (Shakspeare) had an art not only of acquainting the audience with what his actors *say*, but with what they *think*!”

Hamlet's observation is, I think, simply this. He has just remarked that honesty is very rare in the world. To this Polonius assents. The Prince then adds, that since there is so little virtue in the world, since corruption abounds every where, and maggots are *bred* by the sun, even in a dead dog,

Polonius ought to take care to prevent his daughter from walking in the sun, lest she should prove “a breeder of sinners;” for though *conception* in general be a blessing, yet as Ophelia (whom Hamlet supposes to be as frail as the rest of the world,) might chance to *conceive*, it might be a calamity. The maggots *breeding* in a dead dog, seem to have been mentioned merely to introduce the word *conception*; on which word, as Mr. Steevens has observed, Shakspeare has played in *King Lear*: and probably a similar quibble was intended here. The word, however, may have been used in its ordinary sense, for *pregnancy*, without any double meaning.

The slight connection between this and the preceding passage, and Hamlet’s abrupt question, — *Have you a daughter?* were manifestedly intended more strongly to impress Polonius with the belief of the Prince’s madness.

Perhaps this passage ought rather to be regulated thus: — “being a *god-kissing carrion* ;” i. e. a carrion that kisses the sun. The participle *being* naturally refers to the last antecedent, *dog*. Had Shakspeare intended that it should be referred to *sun*, he would probably have written — “*he* being a god,” &c. We have many similar compound epithets in these plays.

However, the instance quoted from *Cymbeline* by Dr. Warburton, “— *common-kissing Titan*,” seems in favour of the regulation that has been hitherto made; for here we find the poet considered the sun as kissing the carrion, not the carrion as kissing the sun.

In justice to Dr. Johnson, I should add, that the high elogium which he has pronounced on Dr.

Warburton's emendation, was founded on the *comment* which accompanied it; of which, however, I think, his judgement must have condemned the reasoning, though his goodness and piety approved its moral tendency. MALONE.

As a doubt, at least, may be entertained on this subject, I have not ventured to expunge a note written by a great critick, and applauded by a greater. STEEVENS.

P. 45, l. 22 - 24. — *conception is a blessing; but as your daughter may conceive, — friend, look to't.*] Thus the quarto. The folio reads thus: “— *conception is a blessing; but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend look to't.*” The meaning seems to be, *conception* (i. e. understanding) is a blessing; but as your daughter may *conceive* (i. e. be pregnant,) *friend look to't*, i. e. have a care of that. STEEVENS.

P. 46, l. 3 - 8. — *the satirical rogue says here, that old men have grey beards; that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber, and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams.*] By the *satirical rogue* he means Juvenal in his 10th Satire. Nothing could be finer imagined for Hamlet, in his circumstances, than the bringing him in reading a description of the evils of long life. WARBURTON.

Had Shakspeare read *Juvenal* in the original, he had met with

“De temone Britanno, Excidet Arviragus” — and

“— Uxorem, Posthume, ducis?”

We should not then have had continually in *Cymbeline*, *Arvirāgus*, and *Posthūmus*. Should it be said that the *quantity* in the former word might

be forgotten, it is clear from the mistake in the *latter*, that Shakspeare could not possibly have read any one of the Roman poets.

There was a translation of the 10th Satire of *Juvenal* by Sir John Beaumont, the elder brother of the famous Francis: but I cannot tell whether it was printed in Shakspeare's time. In that age of quotation, every classick might be picked up by *piece-meal*.

I forgot to mention in its proper place, that another description of *Old Age* in *As you like it*, has been called a parody on a passage in a French poem of Garnier. It is trifling to say any thing about this, after the observation I made in *Macbeth*: but one may remark once for all, that Shakspeare wrote for the *people*; and could not have been so absurd as to bring forward any allusion, which had not been familiarized by some accident or other. FARMER.

P. 46, l. 17. 18. *How pregnant sometimes his replies are!* *Pregnant* is ready, dexterous, apt. STEEVENS.

P. 46, l. 30. ROSENCRANTZ] There was an ambassador of that name in England about the time when this play was written. STEEVENS.

P. 47, l. 18 — last l. & P. 48, l. 1-16. All within the crotchets is wanting in the quartos. STEEVENS.

P. 48, l. 2. 3. — the very substance of the ambitious is merely the *shadow of a dream*.] Shakspeare has accidentally inverted an expression of Pindar, that the state of humanity is *οἷα ὄναρ*, the *dream of a shadow*. JOHNSON.

P. 48, l. 8-10. *Then are our beggars, bodies; and our monarchs, and outstretch'd heroes, the beggars' shadows:*] Shakspeare seems

here to design a ridicule of those declamations against wealth and greatness, that seem to make happiness consist in poverty. JOHNSON.

P. 48, l. 21. — *my thanks are too dear, a half-penny.*] i. e. a half-penny too dear: they are worth nothing. The modern editors read — *at a half-penny.* MALONE.

P. 49, l. 4. — *I have an eye of you;*] *An eye of you* means, I have a glimpse of your meaning. STEEVENS.

P. 49, l. 9. & fol. *I have of late, &c.*] This is an admirable description of a rooted melancholy sprung from thickness of blood; and artfully imagined to hide the true cause of his disorder from the penetration of these two friends, who were set over him as spies. WARBURTON.

P. 49, l. 32. — *lenten entertainment* —] i. e. sparing, like the entertainments given in *Lent*. STEEVENS.

P. 49, l. 33. — *we coted them on the way;*] *To cote* is to overtake.

In the laws of coursing, says Mr. Tollet, “a *cote* is when a greyhound goes endways by the side of his fellow, and gives the hare a turn.” This quotation seems to point out the etymology of the verb to be from the French *coté*, the side.

STEVENSON.
P. 50, l. 4. — *the humorous man shall end his part in peace:*] After these words the folio adds — *the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o’ the sere.* WARBURTON.

P. 50, l. 4. 5. — *the clown shall make those laugh, whose lungs are tickled o’ the sere:*] i. e. those who are asthmatical, and to whom laughter is most uneasy. This is the case (as I am told) with those whose lungs are tickled by the *sere* or

serum: but about these words I am neither very confident, nor very solicitous. STEEVENS.

These words are not in the quarto. I am by no means satisfied with the explanation given, though I have nothing satisfactory to propose. I believe Hamlet only means, that the clown shall make those laugh who have a disposition to laugh; who are pleased with their entertainment. That no asthmatick disease was in contemplation, may be inferred from both the words used, *tickled* and *lungs*, each of which seems to have a relation to laughter, and the latter to have been considered by Shakspeare, as (if I may so express myself,) its natural seat.

O'the sere, or *of the sere*, means, I think, *by the sere*; but the word *sere* I am unable to explain, and suspect it to be corrupt. Perhaps we should read — *the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o'the scene*, i. e. *by the scene*. MALONE.

P. 50, l. 6. 7. — *and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't.*] The lady shall have no obstruction, unless from the lameness of the verse. JOHNSON.

I think, the meaning is, — The lady shall mar the measure of the verse, rather than not express herself freely or fully. HENDERSON.

P. 50, l. 11. — *they travel?*] To *travel*, in Shakspeare's time was the technical word, for which we have substituted *stroll*. So, in the Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels to King Charles the First, a manuscript of which an account is given in Vol. II: "1622. Feb. 17, for a certificate for the Palgrave's servants to *travel* into the country for six weeks, 10s." Again, in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*, 1601: "If he pen for

thee once, thou shalt not need to *travell*, with thy pumps full of gravell, any more, after a blinde jade and a hamper, and stalk upon boords and barrel-heads to an old crackt trumpet." These words are addressed to a player. MALONE.

P. 50, l. 14. 15. I think, their *inhibition* comes by the means of the late *innovation*.] I fancy this is transposed: Hamlet enquires not about an *inhibition*, but an *innovation*; the answer therefore probably was, — *I think, their innovation, that is, their new practice of strolling, comes by means of the late inhibition*. JOHNSON.

The drift of Hamlet's question appears to be this, — How chances it they travel? — i. e. *How happens it that they are become strollers?* — Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways. — i. e. *to have remained in a settled theatre, was the more honourable as well as the more lucrative situation*. To this, Rosen-crantz replies, — Their *inhibition* comes by means of the late *innovation*. — i. e. *their permission to act any longer at an established house is taken away, in consequence of the NEW CUSTOM of introducing personal abuse into their comedies*. Several companies of actors in the time of our author were silenced on account of this licentious practice.

Alteration therefore in the order of the words seem so be quite unnecessary. STEEVENS.

There will still, however, remain some difficulty. The statute 39 Eliz. ch. 4. which seems to be alluded to by the words — *their inhibition*, was not made to inhibit the players from acting any longer at an *established theatre*, but to prohibit them from *strolling*. "All fencers, (says the act,) bearwards, common players of enter-

ludes, and minstrels, *wandering abroad*, (other than players of enterludes, belonging to any baron of this realm or any other honourable personage of greater degree, to be authorized to play under the hand and seal of arms of such baron or personage,) shall be taken, adjudged, and deemed, rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars, and shall sustain such pain and punishments as by this act is in that behalf appointed."

This statute, if alluded to, is repugnant to Dr. Johnson's transposition of the text, and to Mr. Steevens's explanation of it as it now stands. Yet Mr. Steevens's explanation may be right: Shakspeare might not have thought of the act of Elizabeth. He could not, however, mean to charge his friends the *old tragedians* with the *new custom* of introducing personal abuse; but must rather have meant, that the old tragedians were inhibited from performing in the city, and obliged to travel, on account of the misconduct of the younger company. See n. 6. MALONE.

By the late *innovation*, it is probable that Rosencrantz means the late change of government.

M. MASON.

P. 50, l. 19. [Ham. *How comes it? &c.*] The lines enclosed in crotchets are in the folio of 1623, but not in any of the quartos. JOHNSON.

P. 50, l. 21. — an aiery of *children*.] Relating to the play-houses then contending, the *Bankside*, the *Fortune*, &c. played by the children of his Majesty's chapel. POPE.

It relates to the young singing men of the chapel royal, or St. Paul's, of the former of whom perhaps the earliest mention occurs in an anonymous puritanical pamphlet, 1569, entitled *The Children of the Chapel stript and whipt*: "Plaies will

never be suppress'd, while her maiesties unfledged minions flaunt it in silkes and sattens. They had as well be at their popish service in the devils garment's," &c.

Concerning the performances and success of the latter in attracting the best company, I also find the following passage in *Jack Drum's Entertainment, or Pasquil and Katherine*, 1601:

"I saw the *children of Powles* last night:

"And troth they pleas'd me pretty, pretty well,

"The apes, in time, will do it handsomely.

"— I like the audience that frequenteth there

"With much applause: a man shall not be choak'd

"With the stench of garlick, nor be pasted

"To the barmy jacket of a beer-brewer.

"— 'Tis a good *gentle audience*," &c.

It is said in Richard Flecknoe's *Short Discourse of the English Stage*, 1664, that, "both the children of the chappel and St. Paul's, acted playes, the one in White-Friers, the other behinde the Convocation-house in Paul's; till people growing more precise, and playes more licentious, the theatre of Paul's was quite suppress'd, and that of the children of the chappel converted to the use of the children of the revels." STEEVENS.

The suppression to which Flecknoe alludes took place in the year 1583-4; but afterwards both the children of the chapel and of the Revels played at our author's playhouse in Blackfriars, and elsewhere: and the choir-boys of St. Paul's at their own house. See *the Account of our old Theatres* in Vol. II. A certain number of the children of the Revels, I believe, belonged to each of the principal theatres.

Our author cannot be supposed to direct any satire at those young men who played occasionally at his own theatre. Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, and his *Poetaster*, were performed there by the children of Queen Elizabeth's chapel, in 1600 and 1601; and *Eastward Hoe* by the children of the revels, in 1604 or 1605. I have no doubt therefore that the dialogue before us was pointed at the choir-boys of St. Paul's, who in 1601 acted two of Marston's plays, *Antonio and Mellida*, and *Antonio's Revenge*. Many of Lyly's plays were represented by them about the same time; and in 1607 Chapman's *Bussy's Ambois* was performed by them with great applause. It was probably in this and some other noisy tragedies of the same kind, that they cry'd out on the top of question, and were most tyrannically clapp'd for't.

At a later period indeed, after our poet's death, the *Children of the Revels* had an established theatre of their own, and some dispute seems to have arisen between them and the King's company. They performed regularly in 1623, and for eight years afterwards, at the Red Bull in St. John's street; and in 1627, Shakspeare's company obtained an inhibition from the Master of the Revels to prevent their performing any of his plays at their house: as appears from the following entry in Sir Henry Herbert's Office-book, already mentioned: "From Mr. Heminge, in their company's name, to forbid the playinge of any of Shakspeare's playes to the Red-Bull company, this 11th of Aprill, 1627, — 5 0 0." From other passages in the same book, it appears that the Children of the Revels composed the Red Bull company.

We learn from Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, that the little *eyases* here mentioned were the

persons who were guilty of the *late innovation*, or practice of introducing personal abuse on the stage, and perhaps for their particular fault the players in general suffered; and the older and more decent comedians, as well as the children, had on some recent occasion been *inhibited* from acting in London, and compelled to turn strollers. This supposition will make the words concerning which a difficulty has been stated, (see p. 387, n. 3.) perfectly clear. Heywood's *Apology for Actors* was published in 1612; the passage therefore which is found in the folio, and not in the quarto, was probably added not very long before that time.

"Now to speake (says Heywood,) of some abuse *lately* crept into the quality, as *an inveighing against the state, the court, the law, the citty, and their governments, with the particularizing of private mens humours, yet alive, noblemen and others*, I know it distastes many: neither do I any way approve it, nor dare I by any means excuse it. The liberty which some arrogate to themselves, committing their bitterness and liberal invectives against all estates *to the mouthes of children*, supposing their juniority to be a privilege for any rayling, be it never so violent, I could advise all such to curbe, and limit this presumed liberty within the bands of discretion and government. But wise and judicial censurers before whom such complaints shall at any time hereafter come, will not, I hope, impute these abuses to any transgression in *us*, who have ever been carefull and provident to shun the like."

Prynne in his *Histriomastix*, speaking of the state of the stage, about the year 1620, has this passage: "Not to particularise those late new scandalous invective playes, where in sundry per-

sons of place and eminence [Gundemore, the late lord admiral, lord treasurer, and others,] have been particularly personated, jeered, abused in a gross and scurrilous manner," &c.

Since this note was written, I have met with a passage in a letter from Mr. Samuel Calvert to Mr. Winwood, dated March 28, 1605, which might lead us to suppose that the words found only in the folio were added at that time:

"The plays do not forbear to present upon the stage the whole course of this present time, not sparing the King, state, or religion, in so great absurdity, and with such liberty, that any would be afraid to hear them." *Memorials*, Vol. II. p. 54. MALONE.

P. 50, l. 22. Little *eyases*;] i. e. young nestlings, creatures just out of the egg. THEOBALD.

The Book of Haukyng, &c. bl. l. no date, seems to offer another etymology. "And so by-cause the best knowledge is by the *eye*, they be called *eyessed*. Ye may also know an *eyesse* by the paleness of the seres of her legges, or the sere over the beake." STEEVENS.

From *ey*, Teut. ovum, q. d. qui recens ex ovo emersit. Skinner, Etymol. An *aiery* or *eyrie*, as it ought rather to be written, is derived from the same root, and signifies both a young brood of hawks, and the nest itself in which they are produced.

An *eyas* hawk is sometimes written a *nyas* hawk, perhaps from a corruption that has happened in many words in our language, from the latter *n* passing from the end of one word to the beginning of another. However, some etymologists think *nyas* a legitimate word. MALONE.

P. 50, l. 22. — *that cry out on the top of question,*] The meaning seems to be, they ask a common question in the highest note of the voice.

JOHNSON.

I believe *question* in this place, as in many others, signifies *conversation, dialogue*. The meaning of the passage may therefore be — *Children that perpetually recite in the highest notes of voice that can be uttered*. STEEVENS.

When we ask a *question*, we generally end the sentence with a high note. I believe, therefore, that what Rosencrantz means to say is, that these children declaim, through the whole of their parts, in the high note commonly used *at the end of a question*, and are applauded for it. M. MASON.

P. 50, l. 29. — *escoted?*] Paid. From the French *escot*, a shot or reckoning. JOHNSON.

P. 50, l. 29. 30. *Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing?*] Will they follow the *profession* of players no longer than they keep the voices of boys, and sing in the choir? So afterwards he says to the player, *Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech*. JOHNSON.

“*Than they can sing,*” does not merely mean, “*than they keep the voices of boys,*” but is to be understood literally. He is speaking of the choir boys of St. Paul’s. MALONE.

P. 50, l. 33. — *their writers do them wrong.*] I should have been very much surprised if I had not found Ben Jonson among the writers here alluded to. STEEVENS.

P. 51, first l. — *to tarre them on to controversy:*] To provoke any animal to rage, is to *tarre him*. The word is said to come from the Greek *ταρώσσω*. JOHNSON.

P. 51, l. 9. 10. *Hercules and his load too*] i. e. they not only carry away the world, but the world-bearer too: alluding to the story of Hercules's relieving Atlas. This is humorous.

WARBURTON.

The allusion may be to the *Globe* playhouse on the Bankside, the sign of which was *Hercules carrying the Globe*. STEEVENS.

I suppose Shakspeare meant, that the boys drew greater audiences than the elder players of the *Globe* theatre. MALONE.

P. 51, l. 11. 12. *It is not very strange: for my uncle is King of Denmark;*] I do not wonder that the new players have so suddenly risen to reputation, my uncle supplies another example of the facility with which honour is conferred upon new claimants. JOHNSON.

It is not very strange: &c. was originally Hamlet's observation, on being informed that the old tragedians of the city were not so followed as they used to be: but Dr. Johnson's explanation is certainly just, and this passage connects sufficiently well with that which now immediately precedes it.

MALONE.

P. 51, l. 15. — *in little.*] i. e. in miniature.

STEEVENS.

P. 51, l. 21. 22. — *let me comply with you in this garb;*] Sir T. Hanmer reads, — *let me compliment with you.* JOHNSON.

To *comply* is again apparently used in the sense of — to *compliment*, in Act V: "He did *comply* with his dug, before he suck'd it." STEEVENS.

P. 51, l. 29. 30. *I know a hawk from a hand-saw.*] This was a common proverbial speech. The Oxford editor alters it to, — *I know a hawk from an heronshaw*, as if the other had been a cor-

ruption of the players; whereas the poet found the proverb thus corrupted in the mouths of the people: so that the critick's alteration only serves to shew us the original of the expression.

WARBURTON.

Similarity of sound is the source of many literary corruptions. In Holborn we have still the sign of the *Bull and Gate*, which exhibit but an old combination of images. It was originally (as I learn from the title-page of an old play) the *Boulogne Gate*, i. e. one of the gates of *Boulogne*; designed perhaps as a compliment to Henry VIII. who took the place in 1544.

The *Boulogne mouth*, now the *Bull and Mouth*, had probably the same origin, i. e. the *mouth of the Harbour of Boulogne*. STEEVENS.

The *Boulogne Gate* was not one of the gates of *Boulogne*, but of *Calais*; and is frequently mentioned as such by Hall and Holinshed. RITSON.

P. 52, l. 10. *Buz, buz!*] Mere idle talk, the *buz* of the vulgar. JOHNSON.

Buz, buz! are, I believe, only interjections employed to interrupt Polonius. Ben Jonson uses them often for the same purpose, as well as Middleton. STEEVENS.

Buz used to be an interjection at Oxford, when any one began a story that was generally known before. BLACKSTONE.

Buzzer, in a subsequent scene in this play, is used for a *busy talker*. It is, therefore, probable from the answer of Polonius, that *buz* was used, as Dr. Johnson supposes, for an idle rumour without any foundation.

In Ben Jonson's *Staple of News*, the collector of mercantile intelligence is called Emissary *Buz*.

MALONE.

Whatever

Whatever may be the origin of this phrase, or rather of this interjection, it is not unusual, even at this day, to cry *buz* to any person who begins to relate what the company had heard before.

M. MASON.

P. 52, l. 12. *Then came each actor on his ass, —*] This seems to be a line of a ballad. JOHNSON.

P. 52, l. 17. 18. *Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light.*] The tragedies of Seneca were translated into English by Thomas Newton, and others, and published first separate, at different times, and afterwards all together in 1581. One comedy of Plautus, viz. the *Menaechmi*, was likewise translated and published in 1595.

STEEVENS.

I believe the frequency of plays performed at public schools, suggested to Shakspeare the names of *Seneca* and *Plautus* as dramattick authors.

T. WARTON.

P. 52, l. 18. 19. *For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men.*] All the modern editions have, — *the law of wit, and the liberty*; but both my old copies have — *the law of writ*, I believe rightly. *Writ*, for *writing*, composition. *Wit* was not, in our author's time, taken either for *magination*, or *acuteness*, or *both together*, but for *understanding*, for the faculty by which we *apprehend* and *judge*. Those who wrote of the human mind, distinguished its primary powers into *wit* and *will*. Ascham distinguishes boys of tardy and of active faculties into *quick wits* and *slow wits*. JOHNSON.

That *writ* is here used for *writing*, may be proved by the following passage in *Titus Andronicus*:

"Then all too late I bring this fatal *writ*."

STEEVENS.

The old copies are certainly right. *Writ* is used for *writing* by authors contemporary with Shakespeare. MALONE.

P. 52, l. 32. *As by lot, God wot, — It came to pass, As most like it was, —*] The old song from which these quotations are taken, I communicated to Dr. Percy, who has honoured it with a place in the second and third editions of his *Reliques of ancient English Poetry*. This story was also one of the favourite subjects of ancient tapestry.

STEEVENS.

There is a Latin tragedy on the subject of *Jephtha*, by John Christopherson in 1546, and another by Buchanan, in 1554. A third by Du Plessis Mornay is mentioned by Prynne in his *Histriomastix*. The same subject had probably been introduced on the English stage. MALONE.

P. 52, last but one l. The first row of the *pious chanson*] It is *pons chansons* in the first folio edition. The old ballads sung on bridges, and from thence called *Pons chansons*. Hamlet is here repeating ends of old songs. POPE.

It is *pons chansons* in the quarto too. I know not whence the *rubrick* has been brought, yet it has not the appearance of an arbitrary addition. The titles of old ballads were never printed red; but perhaps *rubrick* may stand for *marginal explanation*. JOHNSON.

There are five large volumes of ballads in Mr. Pepys's collection in Magdalen College library, Cambridge, some as ancient as Henry VI's reign, and not one red letter upon any one of the titles.

GREY.

The words, *of the rubrick* were first inserted

by Mr. Rowe, in his edition in 1709. The old quartos in 1604, 1605, and 1611, read *pious chanson*, which gives the sense wanted, and I have accordingly inserted it in the text.

The *pious chansons* were a kind of *Christmas carols*, containing some scriptural history thrown into loose rhymes, and sung about the streets by the common people when they went at that season to solicit alms. Hamlet is here repeating some scraps from a song of this kind, and when Polonius enquires what follows them, he refers him to the *first row* (i. e. division) of one of these, to obtain the information he wanted. STEEVENS.

P. 52, last l. — *my abridgement comes.*] He calls the players afterwards, *the brief chronicles of the times*; but I think he now means only *those who will shorten my talk*. JOHNSON.

An *abridgment* is used for a dramatick piece in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V. sc. 1:

“Say what *abridgment* have you for this evening?”

but it does not commodiously apply to this passage. STEEVENS.

P. 53, l. 4. — *thy face is valanced*] i. e. fringed with a beard. The valance is the fringes or drapery hanging round the tester of a bed.

MALONE.

The folios read *valiant*, which seems right. The comedian was probably “bearded like the pard.” RITSON.

P. 53, l. 5. *Com'st thou to beard me in Denmark?*] To *beard*, anciently signified to *set at defiance*. STEEVENS.

P. 53, l. 8. — *by the altitude of a chopine.*] A *chioppine* is a high shoe, or rather, a clog, worn by the Italians. STEEVENS.

Tom Coryat in his *Crudities*, 1611, p. 262, calls them *chapineys*, and gives the following account of them: "There is one thing used of the Venetian women, and some others dwelling in the cities and townes subject to the signiory of Venice, that is not to be observed (I thinke) amongst any other women in Christendome: which is so common in Venice, that no woman whatsoever goeth without it, either in her house or abroad, a *thing made of wood and covered with leather of sundry colors, some with white, some redde, some yellow*. It is called a chapiney, *which they wear under their shoes*. Many of them are curiously painted; some also of them I have seen fairely gilt: so uncomely a thing (in my opinion) that it is pittie this foolish custom is not cleane banished and exterminated out of the citie. *There are many of these chapineys of a great height even half a yard high*, which maketh many of their women that are very short, seeme much taller than the tallest women we have in England. Also I have heard it observed among them, that by how much the nobler a woman is, by so much the higher are her *chapineys*. All their gentlewomen and most of their wives and widowes that are of any wealth, are assisted and supported eyther by men or women, when they walke abroad, to the end they may not fall. They are borne up most commonly by the left arme, otherwise they might quickly take a fall. REED.

P. 53, l. 10. — *be not crack'd within the ring.*] That is, *crack'd too much for use*. 'This is said to a young player who acted the parts of women. JOHNSON.

P. 53, l. 11. 12. *We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see:]* The amu-

sement of falconry was much cultivated in France. In *All's well that ends well*, Shakspeare has introduced an *astringer* or falconer at the French court. Mr. Tollet, who has mentioned the same circumstance, likewise adds that it is said in *Sir Thomas Browne's Tracts*, p. 116, that "the French seem to have been the first and noblest falconers in the western part of Europe;" and, that the French King sent over his falconers to show that sport to King James the First." See *Weldon's Court of King James*. STEEVENS.

P. 53. l. 19. — 'twas *caviare* to the general:] Giles Fletcher in his *Russe Commonwealth*, 1591, p. 11, says in Russia they have divers kinds of fish "very good and delicate: as the Bellouga & Belougina of four or five elnes long, the Ositrina & Sturgeon, but not too thick nor long. These four kind of fish breed in the Wolgha and are caught in great plenty, and served thence into the whole realme for a good food. Of the roes of these four kinds they make very great store of Icary or *Caveary*." See also Mr. Ritson's *Remarks*, &c. on Shakspeare, (edit. 1778,) p. 199. REED.

Ben Jonson has ridiculed the introduction of these foreign delicacies in his *Cynthia's Revels*: "He doth learn to eat Anchovies, Macaroni, Bovoli, Fagioli, and *Caviare*," &c. STEEVENS.

Florio in his *Italian Dictionary*, 1598, defines, *Caviaro*, "a kinde of salt meat, used in Italie, like black sope; it is made of the roes of fishes."

Lord Clarendon uses *the general* for *the people*, in the same manner as it is used here. Book V. p. 530. MALONE.

P. 53, l. 20. 21. — others, whose judgements,

in such matters, cried in the top of mine,] i. e. whose judgement I had the highest opinion of.

WARBURTON.

I think it means only that were higher than mine. JOHNSON.

Whose judgement, in such matters, was in much higher vogue than mine. HEATH.

Perhaps it means only — whose judgement was more clamorously delivered than mine. We still say of a bawling actor, that he speaks on the top of his voice. STEEVENS.

To over-top is a hunting term applied to a dog when he gives more tongue than the rest of the cry. To this, I believe, Hamlet refers, and he afterwards mentions a CRY of players. HENLEY.

P. 53, l. 22. 23. — *set down with as much modesty as cunning.] Modesty for simplicity.*

WARBURTON.

P. 53, l. 26. — *that might indite the author of affection:] Indite, for convict.* WARBURTON.

i. e. convict the author of being a fantastical affected writer. Maria calls Malvolio an affection'd ass, i. e. an affected ass; and in Love's Labour's Lost, Nathaniel tells the Pedant, that his reasons have been witty, without affection." STEEVENS.

P. 53, l. 27. — *but call'd it, an honest method,] Hamlet is telling how much his judgement differed from that of others. One said, there was no sallets in the lines, &c. but called it an honest method. The author probably gave it, — But I called it an honest method, &c.* JOHNSON.

Honest, for chaste. WARBURTON.

P. 54, first l. & fol. *The rugged Pyrrhus, &c.]* M. Malone once observed to me, that Mr. Capell supposed the speech uttered by the Player before Hamlet, to have been taken from an ancient dra-

ma, entitled "*Dido Queen of Carthage*." I had not then the means of justifying or confuting his remark, the piece alluded to having escaped the hands of the most liberal and industrious collectors of such curiosities. Since, however, I have met with this performance, and am therefore at liberty to pronounce that it did not furnish our author with more than a general hint for his description of the death of Priam, &c.; unless with reference to

"—— the whiff and *wind* of his fell sword

"The unnerved father falls, ——"

we read, ver.

"And with the *wind* thereof the King fell
down;"

and can make out a resemblance between

"So as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood;"

and ver.

"So leaning on his sword, he stood stone
still."

Many of the subsequent lines are surely more ridiculous in themselves, than even Shakspeare's happiest vein of burlesque or parody could have made them. STEEVENS.

P. 54, l. 6. 7. — *head to foot*

Now is he total gules;] *Gules* is a term in the barbarous jargon peculiar to heraldry, and signifies *red*. STEEVENS.

P. 54, l. 7. — *trick'd*] i. e. smeared, painted. An heraldick term. MALONE.

P. 54, l. 34. — *a painted tyrant*,] Shakspeare was probably here thinking of the tremendous personages often represented in old tapestry, whose uplifted swords *stick in the air, and do nothing*.

MALONE.

P. 55, l. 22. He's for a *jig*, or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps:] A *jig*, in our poet's time, signified a ludicrous metrical composition, as well as a dance. Here it is used in the former sense.

MALONE.

P. 55, l. 26. — the *mobled* Queen —] *Mobled* or *mabled* signifies *veiled*. So, Sandys speaking of the Turkish women, says, *their heads and faces are mabled in fine linen, that no more is to be seen of them than their eyes.* Travels.

WARBURTON.

Mobled signifies *huddled, grossly covered.*

JOHNSON.

I meet with this word in Shirley's *Gentleman of Venice*:

"The moon does *mobble* up herself." FARMER.

Mobled, is, I believe, no more than a depravation of *muffled*. It is thus corrupted in *Ogilby's Fables*, Second Part:

"*Mobbled* nine days in my considering cap,

"Before my eyes beheld the blessed day."

In the West this word is still used in the same sense; and that is the meaning of *mobble* in Dr. Farmer's quotation. HOLT WHITE.

The *mabled* Queen (or *mobled* Queen, as it is spelt in the quarto,) means, the Queen attired in a large, coarse, and careless head-dress. A few lines lower we are told she had "a *clout* upon that head, where late the diadem stood."

To *mab*, (which in the North is pronounced *mob*, and hence the spelling of the old copy in the present instance,) says Ray in his Dict. of North Country words, is "to dress carelessly. *Mabs* are *slatterns*."

The ordinary morning head-dress of ladies continued to be distinguished by the name of a *mab*,

to almost the end of the reign of George the Second. The folio reads — the *inobled* Queen.

MALONE.

In the counties of Essex and Middlesex, this morning cap has always been called — a *mob*, and not a *mab*. My spelling of the word therefore agrees with its most familiar pronunciation.

STEEVENS.

P. 55, l. 31. With *bisson* rheum.] *Bisson* or *beesen*, i. e. blind. A word still in use in some parts of the North of England. STEEVENS.

P. 56, l. 11. *Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,*] Drayton in the 13th Song of his *Polyolbion* gives this epithet to dew: “Exhaling the *milch* dew,” &c. STEEVENS.

P. 57, l. 13. & fol. — *that this player here* &c.] It should seem from the complicated nature of such parts as Hamlet, Lear, &c. that the time of Shakspeare had produced some excellent performers. He would scarce have taken the pains to form characters which he had no prospect of seeing represented with force and propriety on the stage.

His plays indeed, by their own power, must have given a different turn to acting, and almost new created the performers of his age. Mysteries, Moralities, and Enterludes, afforded no materials for art to work on, no discriminations of character, or varieties of appropriated language. From tragedies like *Combyses*, *Tamburlaine*, and *Jeronymo*, nature was wholly banished; and the comedies of *Gammer Gurton*, *Common Condycyons*, and *The Old Wives Tale*, might have had justice done to them by the lowest order of human beings.

*Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacius
altae*

was wanting, when the dramas of Shakspeare made their first appearance; and to these we were certainly indebted for the excellence of actors who could never have improved so long as their sensibilities were unawakened, their memories burthened only by pedantick or puritanical declamation, and their manners vulgarized by pleasantries of as low an origin. STEEVENS.

P. 57, l. 16. 17. — *That, from her working,*
all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
 The folio — *warm'd*. This might do, did not the old quarto lead us to a more exact and pertinent reading, which is — *visage wan'd*; i. e. turned *pale* or *wan*. For so the visage appears when the mind is thus affectioned, and not *warm'd* or *flush'd*
 WARBURTON.

Wan'd (*wann'd* it should have been spelt,) is the reading of the quarto, which Dr. Warburton, I think rightly, restored. The folio reads *warm'd*, for which Mr. Steevens contends in the following note:

“The working of the soul, and the effort to shed tears, will give a colour to the actor's face, instead of taking it away. The visage is always *warm'd* and flushed by any unusual exertion in a passionate speech; but no performer was ever yet found, I believe, whose feelings were of such exquisite sensibility as to produce paleness in any situation in which the drama could place him. But if players were indeed possessed of that power, there is no such circumstance in the speech uttered before Hamlet, as could introduce the *wanness* for which Dr. Warburton contends.”

Whether an actor can produce paleness, it is, I think, unnecessary to enquire. That Shakspeare

thought he could, and considered the speech in question as likely to produce *wanness*, is proved decisively by the words which he has put into the mouth of Polonius in this scene; which add such support to the original reading, that I have without hesitation restored it. Immediately after the Player has finished his speech, Polonius exclaims,

“Look, whether he has not *turn'd his colour*, and has *tears in his eyes*.” Here we find the effort to shed tears, *taking away*, not *giving* a colour. MALONE.

The word *aspect* (as Dr. Farmer very properly observes) was in Shakspeare's time accented on the second syllable. The folio exhibits the passage as I have printed it. STEEVENS.

P. 57, l. 21. *What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,*] It is plain Shakspeare alludes to a story told of Alexander the cruel tyrant of Pherae in Thessaly, who seeing a famous tragedian act in the Troades of Euripides, was so sensibly touched that he left the theatre before the play was ended; being ashamed, as he owned, that he who never pitied those he murdered, should weep at the sufferings of *Hecuba* and *Andromache*. See Plutarch in the Life of Pelopidas. UPTON.

Shakspeare, it is highly probable, had read the life of Pelopidas, but I see no ground for supposing there is here an allusion to it. Hamlet is not ashamed of being seen to weep at a theatrical exhibition, but mortified that a player, in a *dream of passion*, should appear more agitated by fictitious sorrow, than the Prince was by a real calamity. MALONE.

P. 57, l. 23. *the motive and the cue for passion,*] *The hint, the direction.* JOHNSON.

This phrase is theatrical, and occurs at least a dozen times in our author's plays. STEEVENS.

P. 57, l. 25. — *the general ear* —] The ear of all mankind. So before, — *Caviare to the general*, that is, to the *multitude*. JOHNSON.

P. 57, l. 31. *John-a-dreams,*] i. e. *of dreams*, means only *John the dreamer*; a nick-name, I suppose, for any ignorant silly fellow. Thus the puppet formerly thrown at during the season of Lent, was called *Jack-a-lent*, and the ignis fatuus *Jack-a-lanthorn*. *John-a-droynes* however, if not a corruption of this nick-name, seems to have been some well known character, as I have met with more than one allusion to him.

STEEVENS.

P. 57, l. 31. — *unpregnant of my cause,*] *Unpregnant*, for *having no due sense of*.

WARBURTON.

Rather, *not quickened with a new desire of vengeance; not teeming with revenge.*

JOHNSON.

P. 57, l. 34. A dam'nd defeat was made.] *Defeat*, for *destruction*. WARBURTON.

Rather, *disposition*. JOHNSON.

The word *defeat*, (which certainly means *destruction* in the present instance) is very licentiously used by the old writers. Shakspeare in *Othello* employs it yet more quaintly. — “*Defeat thy favour with an usurped beard.*” STEEVENS.

P. 58, l. 10. — *kindless* —] *Unnatural*.

JOHNSON.

P. 58, l. 18. — *About my brains!*] *Wits, to*

your work. Brain, go about the present business. JOHNSON.

This expression (which seems a parody on the naval one, — *about ship!*) occurs in the Second Part of the *Iron Age*, by Heywood, 1632.

*“My brain about again! for thou hast found
“New projects now to work on.”*

About, my brain! therefore, (as Mr. M. Mason observes) appears to signify, “be my thoughts shifted into a contrary direction.” STEEVENS.

P. 58, l. 20-23. *That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,*

*Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions.]*

A number of these stories are collected together by Thomas Heywood, in his *Actor's Vindication*.

STEEVENS.

P. 58, l. 28. — *tent him —*] Search his wounds.
JOHNSON.

P. 58, l. 28. — *if he do blench,*] If he shrink, or start. STEEVENS.

P. 58, last but one l. — *I'll have grounds
More relative than this:] Relative, for convictive.* WARBURTON.

Convictive is only the consequential sense. *Relative* is nearly related, closely connected.

JOHNSON.

P. 59, l. 18. 19. *Niggard of question; but, of
our demands,*

Most free in his reply.] This is given as the description of the conversation of a man whom the speaker found not forward to be sounded; and who kept aloof when they would bring him to a confession: but such a description can

never pass but at cross-purposes. Shakspeare certainly wrote it just the other way:

Most free of question; but, of our demands,

Niggard in his reply.

That this is the true reading, we need but turn back to the preceding scene, for Hamlet's conduct—to be satisfied. WARBURTON.

Warburton forgets that by *question*, Shakspeare does not usually mean *interrogatory*, but *discourse*; yet in which ever sense the word be taken, this account given by Rosencrantz agrees but ill with the scene between him and Hamlet, as actually represented. M. MASON.

Slow to begin conversation, but free enough in his answers to our demands. Guildenstern has just said that Hamlet kept aloof when they wished to bring him to confess the cause of his distraction: Rosencrantz therefore here must mean, that *up to that point*, till they touch'd on that, he was free enough in his answers. MALONE.

P. 59, l. 22. 23. — — that certain players

We o'er-raught on the way.] *Over-raught* is *over-reached*, that is, *over-took*. JOHNSON.

P. 60, l. 6. 7. That he, as 'twere by accident, may here

Affront Ophelia:] To *affront*, is only to *meet directly*. JOHNSON.

P. 60, l. 28. 'Tis too much prov'd.] It is found by too frequent experience. JOHNSON.

P. 60, l. 34. Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it,] That is, *compared with* the thing that helps it. JOHNSON.

P. 61, l. 4. and fol. Ham. *To be, or not to be &c.*] Of this celebrated soliloquy, which bursting from a man distracted with contrariety of desires, and

overwhelmed with the magnitude of his own purposes, is connected rather in the speaker's mind, than on his tongue, I shall endeavour to discover the train, and to shew how one sentiment produces another.

Hamlet, knowing himself injured in the most enormous and atrocious degree, and seeing no means of redress, but such as must expose him to the extremity of hazard, meditates on his situation in this manner: *Before I can form any rational scheme of action under this pressure of distress, it is necessary to decide, whether, after our present state, we are to be, or not to be. That is the question, which, as it shall be answered, will determine, whether 'tis nobler, and more suitable to the dignity of reason, to suffer the outrages of fortune patiently, or to take arms against them, and by opposing end them, though perhaps with the loss of life. If to die, were to sleep, no more, and by a sleep to end the miseries of our nature, such a sleep were devoutly to be wished; but if to sleep in death, be to dream, to retain our powers of sensibility, we must pause to consider, in that sleep of death what dreams may come. This consideration makes calamity so long endured; for who would bear the vexations of life, which might be ended by a bare bodkin, but that he is afraid of something in unknown futurity? This fear it is that gives efficacy to conscience, which, by turning the mind upon this regard, chills the ardour of resolution, checks the vigour of enterprize, and makes the current of desire stagnate in inactivity.*

We may suppose that he would have applied these general observations to his own case, but that he discovered Ophelia. JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson's explication of the first five lines of this passage is surely wrong. Hamlet is not deliberating whether after our present state we are to exist or not, but whether he should continue to live, or put an end to his life: as is pointed out by the second and the three following lines, which are manifestly a paraphrase on the first, "whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer, &c. or to take arms." The question concerning our existence in a future state is not considered till the tenth line:—"To sleep! perchance, to *dream*;" &c. The train of Hamlet's reasoning from the middle of the fifth line, "If to die, were to sleep," &c. Dr. Johnson has marked out with his usual accuracy.

MALONE.

P. 61, l. 6. *The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune;*] "Homines nos ut esse meminerimus, eâ lege natos, ut omnibus *telis fortunæ* proposita sit vita nostra." Cic. Epist. Fam. v. 16. STEEVENS.

P. 61, l. 7. — *to take arms against a sea of troubles,*] *A sea of troubles* among the Greeks grew into a proverbial usage; *κακῶν θάλασσα, κακῶν τρικυμία*. So that the expression figuratively means, the troubles of human life, which flow in upon us, and encompass us round, like a sea. THEOBALD.

Mr. Pope proposes *siege*. I know not why there should be so much solicitude about this metaphor. Shakspeare breaks his metaphors often, and in this desultory speech there was less need of preserving them. JOHNSON.

One cannot but wonder that the smallest doubt should be entertained concerning an expression which is so much in Shakspeare's manner; yet, to preserve the integrity of the metaphor, Dr. Warburton

ton reads *assail* of troubles. In the *Prometheus Vinctus* of Aeschylus a similar imagery is found:

Δυσχειμερον γε πελαγος ατηρας δυης.

"The stormy sea of dire calamity."

and in the same play, as an anonymous writer has observed, (*Gent. Magazine*, Aug. 1772,) we have a metaphor no less harsh than that of the text:

Θολεροι δε λογοι παιουσ' εικη

Στυγνης προς κυμασιν ατης.

"My plaintive words in vain confusedly beat

"Against the waves of hateful misery."

Shakspeare might have found the very phrase that he has employed, in *The Tragedy of Queen Cordila*, MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES, 1575, which undoubtedly he read:

"For lacke of frendes to tell my seas of guilt-lesse smart." MALONE.

Menander uses this very expression. *Fragm.* p. 22. Amstel. 12mo. 1719:

Εις πελαγος αυτον εμβαλεις γαρ πραγματων.

"In *mare molestiarum* te conjicies."

HOLT WHITE.

P. 61, l. 8. — *To die*, — *to sleep*,] This passage is ridiculed in *The Scornful Lady* of Beaumont and Fletcher, as follow:

"——be deceas'd, that is, asleep, for so the word is taken. *To sleep, to die; to die, to sleep*; a very figure, sir." &c. &c. STEEVENS.

P. 61, l. 15. — *coil*,] i. e. turmoil, bustle.

WARBURTON.

P. 61, l. 16. — *There's the respect*,] i. e. the consideration. MALONE.

P. 61, l. 18 et fol. *For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,*

The oppressor's wrong, &c.] The evils here complained of are not the product of time or duration simply, but of a corrupted age or manners. We may be sure, then, that Shakspeare wrote:

—— *the whips and scorns* of th' time.
and the description of the evils of a corrupt age, which follows, confirms this emendation.

WARBURTON.

It may be remarked, that Hamlet, in his enumeration of miseries, forgets, whether properly or not, that he is a Prince, and mentions many evils to which inferior stations only are exposed.

JOHNSON.

I think we might venture to read — *the whips and scorns o'the times*, i. e. of times satirical as the age of Shakspeare, which probably furnished him with the idea.

In the reigns of Elizabeth and James (particularly in the former) there was more illiberal private abuse and peevish satire published, than in any others I ever knew of, except the present one. I have many of these publications, which were almost all pointed at individuals.

Whips and *scorns* are surely as inseparable companions, as publick punishment and infamy.

Quips, the word which Dr. Johnson would introduce, is derived, by all etymologists, from *whips*.

Hamlet is introduced as reasoning on a question of general concernment. He therefore takes in all such evils as could befall mankind in general, without considering himself at present as a Prince, or wishing to avail himself of the few exemptions which high place might once have claimed.

In part of King James 1st *Entertainment pass-*

ing to his Coronation, by Ben Jonson and Decker, is the following line, and note on that line:

“And first account of years, of months,
OF TIME.”

“By time we understand *the present*.” This explanation affords the sense for which I have contended, and without change. STEEVENS.

P. 61, l. 23. 24. When he himself might his
quietus make

With a *bare bodkin*?] The first expression probably alluded to the writ of discharge which was formerly granted to those barons and knights who personally attended the King on any foreign expedition. This discharge was called a *quietus*.

It is at this time the term for the acquittance which every sheriff receives on settling his accounts at the exchequer.

A *bodkin* was the ancient term for a *small dagger*. STEEVENS.

By a *bare bodkin*, does not perhaps mean, “by so little an instrument as a dagger,” but “by an *unsheathed dagger*.”

In the account which Mr. Steevens has given of the original meaning of the term *quietus*, after the words, “who personally attended the King on any foreign expedition,” should have been added, — *and were therefore exempted from the claims of scutage, or a tax on every knight's fee*. MALONE.

P. 61, l. 25. *To grunt and sweat*] Thus the old copies. It is undoubtedly the true reading, but can scarcely be borne by modern ears.

JOHNSON.

I apprehend that it is the duty of an editor to exhibit what his author wrote, and not to substitute what may appear to the present age prefer-

able: and Dr. Johnson was of the same opinion. See his note on the word *hugger-mugger*, Act. IV. sc. v. I have therefore, though with some reluctance, adhered to the old copies, however unpleasing this word may be to the ear. On the stage, without doubt, an actor is at liberty to substitute a less offensive word. To the ears of our ancestors it probably conveyed no unpleasing sound; for we find it used by Chancer and others:

“But never *gront* he at no stroke but on,

“Or elles at two, but if his storie lie.”

The Monkes Tale, v. 14/27, Tyrwhitt's edit. MALONE.

P. 61, l. 27. 28. *The undiscover'd country,
from whose bourn*

No traveller returns, — puzzles the will;

This has been cavilled at by Lord Orrery and others, but without reason. The idea of a *traveller* in Shakspeare's time, was of a person who gave an account of his adventures. Every voyage was a *Discovery*. John Taylor has “*A Discovery*, by sea from London to Salisbury.”

FARMER.

This passage has been objected to by others on a ground which, at the first view of it, seems more plausible. Hamlet himself, it is objected, has had ocular demonstration that travellers do sometimes return from this strange country.

I formerly thought this an inconsistency. But this objection also is founded on a mistake. Our poet without doubt in the passage before us intended to say, that from the *unknown* regions of the dead no traveller returns, with all his *corporal powers*; such as he who goes on a voyage of *discovery* brings back, when he returns to the port from which he sailed. The traveller whom

Hamlet had seen, though he appeared in the same habit which he had worn in his life time, was nothing but a shadow; "invulnerable as the air," and consequently *incorporeal*.

If, says the objector, the traveller has once reached this coast, it is not an undiscovered country. But by *undiscovered*, Shakspeare, meant not undiscovered by departed spirits, but, undiscovered or unknown to "such fellows as us, who crawl beneath earth and heaven;" *superis incognita tellus*. In this sense every country, of which the traveller does not return *alive* to give an account, may be said to be *undiscovered*. The ghost has given us no account of the region from whence he came, being, as he has himself informed us, "forbid to tell the secrets of his prison-house."

MALONE.

Perhaps this is another instance of Shakspeare's acquaintance with his Bible: "Afore I goe thither, from *whence I shall not turne againe*, even to the lande of darknesse and shadowe of death; yea into that darke cloudie lande and dead ye shadowe whereas is no order, but terrible feare as in the darknesse." *Job*, ch. x.

"The way that I must goe is at hande, but *whence I shall not turne againe*," *Ibid.* ch. 16.

I quote Cranmer's Bible. DOUCE.

P. 61, last but one l. And enterprizes of great *pitch*] Thus the folio.

The quartos read, of great *pitch*. STEEVENS.

Pitch seems to be the better reading. The allusion is to the *pitching* or throwing *the bar*; — a manly exercise, usual in 'country villages. RITSON.

P. 62, l. 2. 3. — *Nymph, in thy orisons*

Be all my sins remember'd.] This is a touch of nature. Hamlet, at the sight of

O helia does not immediately recollect, that he is to personate madness, but makes her an address grave and solemn, such as the foregoing meditation excited in his thoughts. JOHNSON.

P. 62, l. 23. 24. *That if you be honest, and fair, you should admit no discourse to your beauty.*] This is the reading of all the modern editions, and is copied from the quarto. The folio reads, — *your honesty* should admit no discourse to your beauty. The true reading seems to be this, — *If you be honest and fair, you should admit your honesty to no discourse with your beauty.* This is the sense evidently required by the process of the conversation. JOHNSON.

The reply of Ophelia proves beyond doubt, that this reading is wrong.

The reading of the folio appears to be the right one, and requires no amendment. — “Your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty,” means, — “Your honesty should not admit your beauty to any discourse with her;” which is the very sense that Johnson contends for, and expressed with sufficient clearness. M. MASON.

P. 62, l. 29. 30. — *that the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness:*] The modern editors read — *its* likeness; but the text is right. Shakspeare and his contemporaries frequently use the personal for the neutral pronoun.

MALONE.

P. 63, l. 6. — *with more offences at my beck*] — That is, *always ready to come about me.*

STEEVENS.

P. 63, l. 7. — *than I have thoughts to put them in,*] *To put a thing into thought, is to think on it.* JOHNSON.

P. 63, l. 25. *I have heard of your paintings too, &c.]* This is according to the quarto; the folio, for *painting*, has *prattlings*, and for *face* has *pace*, which agrees with what follows, *you jig, you amble*. Probably the author wrote both. I think the common reading best. JOHNSON.

I would continue to read, *paintings*, because these destructive aids of beauty seem, in the time of Shakspeare, to have been general objects of satire. STEEVENS.

P. 63, l. 26. 27. *God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another:]* In *Guzman de Alfarache*, 1623, p. 13, we have an invective against painting in which is a similar passage: "O filthinesse, above all filthinesse! O affront, above all other affronts! *that God having given thee one face, thou shouldst abuse his image and make thyselfe another.*" REED.

P. 63, l. 29. — *and make your wantonness your ignorance:]* You mistake by *wanton* affectation, and pretend to mistake by *ignorance*.

JOHNSON.

P. 63, l. 31. 32. — *those that are married already, all but one, shall live;]* By the one who shall not live, he means his step-father.

MALONE.

P. 64, l. 1. 2. *The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword:]*

The poet certainly meant to have placed his words thus:

*The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye,
tongue, sword;*

otherwise the excellence of *tongue* is appropriated to the *soldier*, and the *scholar* wears the *sword*.

WARNER.

This regulation is needless. So, in *Tarquin and Lucrece*:

"Princes are the glass, the school, the
book,

"Where subjects eyes do learn, do read,
do look."

And in *Quintilian*: "Multum agit sexus, aetas, conditio; ut in *faeminis, senibus, pupillis, liberos, parentes, conjuges, alligantibus.*"

FARMER.

P. 64, l. 4. *The glass of fashion,*] "Speculum consuetudinis." *Cicero.* STEEVENS.

P. 64, l. 4. — the mould of form,] The model by whom all endeavoured to form themselves.

JOHNSON.

P. 64, l. 9. *Like sweet bells jangled, out of
tune and harsh;*] Thus

the folio. The quarto — out of *time.* STEEVENS.

These two words in the hand-writings of Shakespeare's age are almost indistinguishable, and hence are frequently confounded in the old copies.

MALONE.

P. 64, l. 11. *Blasted with ecstasy:*] The word *ecstasy* was anciently used to signify some degree of alienation of mind.

So, Gawin Douglas, translating — *stetit acri fixa dolore*:

"In *ecstasy* she stood, and mad almaist."

STEEVENS.

P. 64, l. 19. — the *disclose,*] This was the technical term. MALONE.

P. 64, l. 2. — *let her be round with him;*] To be *round* with a person, is to reprimand him with freedom. So, in *A Mad World, my Masters*, by Middleton, 1608: "She's *round* with her i'faith."

MALONE.

P. 65, l. 22. — *a robustious perriwig-pated fellow*] This is a ridicule on the quantity of false hair worn in Shakspeare's time, for wigs were not in common use till the reign of Charles II. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Julia says — "I'll get me such a colour'd perriwig."

Players, however, seem to have worn them most generally. So, in *Every Woman in her Humour*, 1609: "——as none wear hoods but monks and ladies; and feathers but fore-horses, &c; — none perriwigs but players and pictures.

STEEVENS.

P. 65, l. 23. 24. to split the ears of the *groundlings*:] The meaner people then seem to have sat below, as they now sit in the upper gallery, who, not well understanding poetical language, were sometimes gratified by a mimical and mute representation of the drama, previous to the dialogue.

JOHNSON.

Before each act of the tragedy of *Jocasta*, translated from Euripides, by Geo. Gascoigne and Fra. Kinwelmersh, the order of these dumb shows is very minutely described. This play was presented at Gray's-Inn by them in 1566. The mute exhibitions included in it are chiefly emblematical, nor do they display a picture of one single scene which is afterwards performed on the stage. In some other pieces I have observed, that they serve to introduce such circumstances as the limits of a play would not admit to be represented.

In short, dumb shows sometimes supplied deficiencies, and, at others, filled up the space of time which was necessary to pass while business was supposed to be transacted in foreign parts. With this method of preserving one of the unities, our ancestors appear to have been satisfied.

Ben Jonson mentions the *groundlings* with equal contempt. "The understanding gentlemen of the ground here."

In our early play-houses the pit had neither floor nor benches. Hence the term of *groundlings* for those who frequented it.

The *groundling*, in its primitive signification, means a fish which always keeps at the bottom of the water. STEEVENS.

P. 65, l. 24-26. — who, for the most part, are *capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and noise*] i. e. have a capacity for nothing but dumb shows; understanding nothing else. So, in Heywood's *History of Women*, 1624: "I have therein imitated our *historical* and comical poets, that write to the stage; who, lest the auditory should be dulled with serious discourses, in every act present some zany, with his mimick gesture, to breed in the less *capable* mirth and laughter. MALONE.

I believe the meaning is, *shows, without words to explain them*. JOHNSON.

Rather, I believe shows which are too confusedly conducted to explain themselves.

I meet with one of these in Heywood's play of *The Four Prentices of London*, 1615, where the *Presenter* says:

"I must entreat your patience to forbear

"While we do feast your eye and starve your ear.

"For in *dumb shews*, which, were they writ at large,

"Would ask a long and tedious circumstance,

"Their infant fortunes I will soon express:" &c.

Then follow the *dumb shows*, which well deserve the character Hamlet has already given of this species of entertainment, as may be seen from the following passage: "Enter Taucered, with Bella Franca richly attired, she *somewhat affecting him*, though she makes *no show of it*." Surely this may be called an *inexplicable dumb show*.

STEEVENS.

P. 65, l. 27. *Termagant* (says Dr. Percy) is the name given in the old romances to the god of the *Sarazens*; in which he is constantly linked with *Mahound* or *Mohammed*. Thus in the legend of *SYR GUY*, the Soudan swears:

"So helpe me *Mahowne* of might,

"And *Termagaunt* my God so bright."

Termagant is also mentioned by Spencer in his *Faery Queen*, and by Chaucer in *The Tale of Sir Topas*; and by Beaumont and Fletcher in *King or no King*, as follows: "This would make a saint swear like a soldier, and a soldier like *Termagant*." STEEVENS.

P 65, l. 27. — *it out-herods Herod*:] The character of *Herod* in the ancient mysteries, was always a violent one.

Chaucer, describing a parish clerk, in his *Miller's Tale*, says:

"He playeth *Herodes* on a skaffold high."

The parish clerks and other subordinate ecclesiastics appear to have been our first actors, and to have represented their characters on distinct pulpits for *scaffolds*. Thus, in one of the stage-directions to the 27th pageant in the Coventry collection already mentioned: "What tyme that processyon is entered into yt place, and the Herowdys taken his *schaffalde*, and Annas and Cayphas their *schoffaldys*,"

&c. STEEVENS.

P. 66. l. 5 - 5. — *to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure.*] The age of the time can hardly pass. May we not read, the face and body, or did the author write, the page? The page suits well with form and pressure, but ill with body. JOHNSON.

To exhibit the form and pressure of the age of the time, is, to represent the manners of the time suitable to the period that is treated of, according as it may be ancient, or modern. STEEVENS.

I can neither think this passage right as it stands, or approve of either of the amendments suggested by Johnson. — There is one more simple than either, that will remove every difficulty. Instead of *the very age and body of the time*," (from which it is hard to extract any meaning,) I read — "*every age and body of the time*;" and then the sense will be this — "Show virtue her own likeness, and every stage of life, every profession or body of men, its form and resemblance." By *every age*, is meant the *different stages of life*; — by *every body*, the *various fraternities, sorts, and ranks of mankind*. M. MASON.

Perhaps Shakspeare did not mean to connect these words. It is the end of playing, says Hamlet, to shew the age in which we live, and the body of he time, its form and pressure: to delineate exactly the manners of the age, and the particular humour of the day. MALONE.

Pressure. i. e. Resemblance, as in a *print*.

JOHNSON.

P. 66, l. 8. — the censure of which one,] The meaning is, "the censure of one of which," and probably that should be the reading also. The

present reading, though intelligible, is very licentious, especially in prose. M. MALONE.

P. 66, l. 9. — *in your allowance,*] in your approbation. MALONE.

P. 66, l. 10-16 — *there be players, that I have seen play, — and heard others praise, and that highly, — not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of christians, nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted, and bellow'd, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, &c.]* I would read thus: "There be players, that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly (not to speak profanely) that neither having the accent nor the gait of Christian, Pagan, nor *Mussulman*, have so strutted and bellowed, that I thought some of nature's journeymen had made *the men*, and not made them well," &c. FARMER.

I have no doubt that our author wrote, — "that I thought some of nature's journeymen had made *them*, and not made them well," &c. *Them* and *men* are frequently confounded in the old copies. In the present instance the compositor probably caught the word *men* from the last syllable of *journeymen*. Shakspeare could not mean to assert as a general truth, that nature's journeymen had made *men*, i. e. all mankind; for, if that were the case, these strutting players would have been on a footing with the rest of the species. Nature herself, the poet means to say, made all mankind except these strutting players, and they were made by Nature's *journeymen*.

This notion of Nature keeping a shop, and employing journeymen to form mankind, was common in Shakspeare's time. MALONE.

Profanely seems to relate, not to the praise which he has mentioned, but to the censure which he is about to utter. Any gross or indelicate language was called *profane*. JOHNSON.

P. 66, l. 20. et fol. — *And let those, that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them: &c.*] Stowe informs us, (p. 697, edit. 1615), that among the twelve players who were sworn the Queen's servants in 1583, "were two rare men, viz. Thomas Wilson, for a quick delicate refined *extemporall witte*; and Richard Tarleton, for a wondrous plentiful, pleasant *extemporall witt*, &c."

Again, in *Tarleton's Newes from Purgatory*: "—— I absented myself from all plaies, as wanting that merrie Roscius of plaiers that famosed all comedies so with his pleasant and *extemporall invention*."

This cause for complaint, however, against low comedians, is still more ancient. STEEVENS.

The clown very often addressed the audience, in the middle of the play, and entered into a contest of raillery and sarcasm with such of the audience as chose to engage with him. It is to this absurd practice that Shakspeare alludes. See the *Historical Account of our old English Theatres*, Vol. II. MALONE.

P. 67, l. 16. *And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,*] I believe the sense of *pregnant* in this place is, *quick, ready, prompt*. JOHNSON.

P. 67 l. 18. — *[my dear soul]* Perhaps—my *clear* soul. JOHNSON.

Dear soul is an expression equivalent to the *φίλα γούνατα, φίλον ἦτορ*, of Homer.

STEEVENS.

P. 67, l. 24. *Whose blood and judgement are so well co-mingled.*]

According to the doctrine of the four humours, *desire* and *confidence* were seated in the blood, and *judgement* in the phlegm, and the due mixture of the humours made a perfect character. JOHNSON.

P. 68, l. 5. — *Vulcan's stithy.*] *Stithy* is a smith's anvil. JOHNSON.

P. 68, l. 23. 24. — *these words are not mine.*

Ham. *No, nor mine now.*] A man's words, says the proverb, are his own no longer than he keeps them unspoken. JOHNSON.

P. 68, l. 25. — *you play'd once in the university,*] It should seem from the following passage in Vice Chancellor Hatchet's letters to Lord Burghley on June 21, 1580 that the common players were likewise occasionally admitted to perform there: "Whereas it hath pleased your Honour to recommend my lorde of Oxenford his players, that they might show their cunning in several plays already practised by 'em before the Queen's Majesty" — (denied on account of the pestilence and commencement:) "of lve we denied the like to the Right Honourable the Lord of Leicester his servants." FARMER.

The practice of acting Latin plays in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, is very ancient, and continued to near the middle of the last century. They were performed occasionally for the entertainment of Princes and other great personages; and regularly at Christmas, at which time a *Lord of misrule* was appointed at Oxford, to regulate the exhibitions, and a similar officer with the title of *Imperator*, at Cambridge. The most celebrated actors at Cambridge were the students of St. John's and King's colleges: at Ox-

ford, those of Christ-Church. In the hall of that college a Latin comedy called *Marcus Geminus*, and the Latin tragedy of *Progne*, were performed before Queen Elizabeth in the year 1566; and in 1564, the Latin tragedy of *Dido* was played before her Majesty, when she visited the university of Cambridge. The exhibition was in the body or nave of the chapel of King's college, which was lighted by the royal guards, each of whom bore a staff torch in his hand. See Peck's *Desider. Cur.* p. 36, n. x. The actors in this piece were all of that college. The author of the tragedy, who in the Latin account of this royal visit, in the Museum, [MSS. Baker, 7037, p. 203,] is said to have been *Regalis Collegii olim socius*, was, I believe, John Rightwise, who was elected a fellow of King's college, in 1507, and according to Anthony Wood, "made the tragedy of *Dido* out of Virgil, and acted the same with the scholars of his school [St. Paul's, of which he was appointed master in 1522,] before Cardinal Wolsey with great applause." In 1583, the same play was performed at Oxford, in Christ-Church hall, before Albertus de Alasco, a Polish Prince Palatine, as was William Gager's Latin comedy, entitled *Rivales*. On Elizabeth's second visit to Oxford, in 1592, a few years before the writing of the present play, she was entertained on the 24th and 26th of September, with the representation of the last-mentioned play, and another Latin comedy, called *Bellum Grammaticale*. MALONE.

P. 68, l. 30. *I did enact Julius Caesar:*] A Latin play on the subject of Caesar's death was performed at Christ-Church in Oxford, in 1582; and several years before, a Latin play on the same subject, written by Jacques Grevin, was acted in the

the college of Beauvais, at Paris. I suspect that there was likewise an English play on the story of Caesar before the time of Shakspeare. See *Essay on the Order of Shakspeare's Plays*. MALONE.

P. 68, l. 30. 31. *I was kill'd i'the Capitol;*] This, it is well known, was not the case; for Caesar, we are expressly told by Plutarch, was killed in *Pompey's Portico*. But our poet followed the received opinion, and probably the representation of his own time, in a play on the subject of Caesar's death, previous to that which he wrote. The notion that Julius Caesar was killed in the Capitol is as old as the time of Chaucer. MALONE.

P. 68, l. 32. *It was a brute part of him,*] Sir John Harrington in his *Metamorphosis of Ajax*, 1596, has the same quibble: "O brave-minded *Brutus*! but this I must truly say, they were two *bruitish* parts both of him and you: one to kill his sons for treason, the other to kill his father in treason." STEEVENS.

P. 68, last l. — they stay upon your *patience*.] May it not be read more intelligibly, — *they stay upon your pleasure*. In *Macbeth* it is:

"Noble Macbeth, we stay upon your *leisure*."

JOHNSON.

P. 69, l. 6. [*Lying down at OPHELIA's feet*.] To lie at the feet of a mistress during any dramatick representation, seems to have been a common act of gallantry. STEEVENS.

P. 69, l. 10. I meant country *matters*?] Dr. Johnson, from a casual inadvertence, proposed to read—country *manners*. The old reading is certainly right. What Shakspeare meant to allude to,

must be too obvious to every reader, to require any explanation. MALONE.

P. 69, l. 19. ——— *your only jig-maker.*] There may have been some humour in this passage, the force of which is now diminished:

“ ——— many gentlemen

“ Are not, as in the days of understanding,

“ Now satisfied without a *jig*, which since

“ They cannot, with their honour, call
for after

“ The play, they look to be serv'd up in
the middle.”

Changes, or Love in a Maze, by
Shirley, 1632.

In *The Hog hath lost his Pearl*, 1614, one of the players comes to solicit a gentleman to *write a jig* for him. A *jig* was not in Shakspeare's time only a dance, but a ludicrous dialogue in metre, and of the lowest kind, like Hamlet's conversation with Ophelia. Many of these jiggs are entered in the books of the Stationers' Company: — “ Philips his *Jigg* of the slyppers, 1595. Kempe's *Jigg* of the Kitchen-stuff-woman, 1595.” STEEVENS.

A *jig* was not always in the form of a dialogue. Many historical ballads were formerly called *jigs*.
MALONE.

A *jig*, though it signified a ludicrous dialogue in metre, yet it also was used for a dance. RITSON.

P. 69, l. 24. 25. *Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables.*] The conceit of these words is not taken. They are an ironical apology for his mother's cheerful looks: two months was long enough in conscience to make any dead husband forgotten. But the editors in their nonsensical blunder, have made Hamlet say

just the contrary. That the devil and he would both go into mourning, though his mother did not. The true reading is — *Nay, then let the devil wear black, 'fore I'll have a suit of sable.* 'Fore, i. e. before. As much as to say, — Let the devil wear black for me, I'll have none. The Oxford editor despises an emendation so easy, and reads it thus, — *Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of ermine.* And you could expect no less, when such a critick had the dressing of him. But the blunder was a pleasant one. The senseless editors had wrote *sables*, the fur so called, for *sable*, black. And the critick only changed this fur for that; by a like figure, the common people say, — *You rejoice the cockles of my heart, for the muscles of my heart;* an unlucky mistake of one shell-fish for another.

WARBURTON.

I know not why our editors should with such implacable anger persecute their predecessors. *Οἱ νεκροὶ μὴ δάκνουσιν*, the dead, it is true, can make no resistance, they may be attacked with great security; but since they can neither feel nor mend, the safety of mauling them seems greater than the pleasure; nor perhaps would it much misbeseem us to remember, amidst our triumphs over the *nonsensical* and *senseless*, that we likewise are men; that *debemur morti*, and as Swift observed to Burnet, shall soon be among the dead ourselves.

I cannot find how the common reading is nonsense, nor why Hamlet, when he laid aside his dress of mourning, in a country where it was *bitter cold*, and the air was *nipping and eager*, should not have a *suit of sables*. I suppose it is

well enough known, that the fur of *sables* is not black. JOHNSON.

A *suit of sables* was the richest dress that could be worn in Denmark. STEEVENS.

Here again is an equivocal. In *Massinger's Old Law*, we have,

“—— A cunning grief,

“That's only faced with *sables* for a show,

“But gawdy-hearted. FARMER.

Nay then, says Hamlet, if my father be so long dead as you say, let the devil wear black; as for me, so far from wearing a mourning dress, I'll wear the most costly and magnificent suit that can be procured; *a suit trimmed with sables*.

Our poet furnished Hamlet with a suit of *sables* on the present occasion, not as I conceive, because such a dress was suited to “a country where it was bitter cold, and the air was nipping and eager,” (as Dr. Johnson supposed,) nor because “a suit of *sables* was the richest dress that could be worn in *Denmark*,” (as Mr. Steevens had suggested,) of which probably he had no knowledge, but because a suit trimmed with *sables* was in Shakspeare's time the richest dress worn by men in *England*. We have had again and again occasion to observe, that, wherever his scene might happen to be, the customs of his own country were still in his thoughts.

By the statute of apparel, 24 Henry VIII, c. 13, (article *furres*,) it is ordained, that none under the degree of an *earl* may use *sables*.

Bishop says in his *Blossoms*, 1577, speaking of the extravagance of those times, that a *thousand ducates* were sometimes given for “a *face of sables*.”

That a suit of *sables* was the magnificent dress of our author's time, appears from a passage in Ben Jonson's *Discoveries*: "Would you not laugh to meet a great counsellor of state, in a flat cap, with his trunk-hose, and a hobby-horse cloak, and yond haberdasher in a velvet gown trimm'd with *sables*?"

Florio in his Italian Dictionary, 1598, thus explains *zibilini*: "The rich furre called *sables*." — *Sables* is the skin of the sable Martin.

MALONE.

P. 69, l. 28. 29. — *he must build churches then:*] Such benefactors to society were sure to be recorded by means of the feast-day on which the patron saints and founders of churches were commemorated in every parish. This custom having been long disused, the names of the builders of sacred edifices are no longer known to the vulgar, and are preserved only in antiquarian memoirs. STEEVENS.

P. 69, l. 30. — *the hobby-horse;*] Amongst the country May-games there was an hobby-horse, which, when the puritannical humour of those times opposed and discredited these games, was brought by the poets and ballad-makers as an instance of the ridiculous zeal of the sectaries: from these ballads Hamlet quotes a line or two.

WARBURTON.

P. 69, l. 31. *For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse it forgot.*] In *Love's Labour's Lost*, this line is also introduced. In a small black letter book, entitled, *Plays Confuted*, by Stephen Gosson, I find the *hobby-horse* enumerated in the list of dances. STEEVENS.

P. 70, l. 16. — *this is miching mallecho: it means mischief.*] To *mich* signified, originally,

to keep hid and out of sight; and, as such men generally did it for the purposes of *lying in wait*, it then signified to rob. And in this sense Shakspeare uses the noun, a *micher*, when speaking of Prince Henry amongst a gang of robbers. *Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher? Shall the son of England prove a thief?* And in this sense it is used by Chaucer, in his translation of *Le Roman de la Rose*, where he turns the word *lierre*, (which is *larron, voleur*,) by *micher*.

WARBURTON.

The word *miching* is daily used in the West of England for *playing truant*, or sculking about in private for some sinister purpose; and *malicho*, inaccurately written for *malheco*, signifies *mischief*; so that *miching malicho* is *mischief on the watch for opportunity*. When Ophelia asks Hamlet — “What means this?” she applies to him for an explanation of what she had not seen in the show; and not, as Dr. Warburton would have it, the purpose for which the show was contrived. Besides, *malhechor* no more signifies a *poisoner*, than a perpetrator of any other crime. HENLEY.

A secret and wicked contrivance; a concealed wickedness. To *mich* is a provincial word, and was probably once general, signifying to lie hid, or play the truant. In Norfolk *michers* signify *pilferers*. The signification of *miching* in the present passage may be ascertained by a passage in Decker's *Wonderful Yeare*, 4to. 1603: “Those that could shift for a time, — went most bitterly *miching* and muffled, up and downe, with rue and wormwood stuf into their ears and nostrils.”

MALONE.

P. 70, l. 25. *Be not you ashamed to show,*]

The conversation of Hamlet with Ophelia, which cannot fail to disgust every modern reader, is probably such as was peculiar to the young and fashionable of the age of Shakspeare, which was, by no means, an age of delicacy. The poet is, however, blameable; for extravagance of thought, not indecency of expression, is the characteristic of madness, at least of such madness as should be represented on the scene. STEEVENS.

P. 71, l. 2. *Phoebus' cart*] A chariot was anciently so called. STEEVENS.

P. 71, l. 5. — with borrow'd *sheen*,] Splendor, lustre. JOHNSON.

P. 71, l. 25. *My operant powers*] *Operant* is active. Shakspeare gives it in *Timon of Athens* as an epithet to *poison*. STEEVENS.

P. 71, l. 34. *The instances*,] *The motives*. JOHNSON.

P. 72, l. 11. *To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:*] The performance of a resolution, in which only the *resolver* is interested, is a debt only to himself, which he may therefore remit at pleasure.

JOHNSON.

P. 72, l. 14. 15. *The violence of either grief or joy*

Their own enactures with themselves destroy:] What grief or joy *enact* or determine in their violence, is revoked in their abatement. *Enactures* is the word in the quarto; all the modern editions have *enactors*.

JOHNSON.

P. 73, l. 5. *An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!*] May my whole liberty and enjoyment be to live on her-

mit's fare in a prison. *Anchor* is for *anchoret*.
JOHNSON.

This abbreviation of the word *anchoret* is very ancient. STEEVENS.

P. 73, l. 30. — *his wife, Baptista:*] *Baptista* is, I think, in Italian, the name always of a man.
JOHNSON.

I believe *Battista* is never used singly by the Italians, being uniformly compounded with *Giam* (for *Giovanni*), and meaning, of course, *John the Baptist*. Nothing more was therefore necessary to detect the forgery of Shebbeare's *Letters on the English Nation*, than his ascribing them to *Battista Angeloni*. RITSON.

P. 73, l. 33. *Let the gall'd jade wince,*] This is a proverbial saying. STEEVENS.

P. 73, last l. This is one Lucianus, *nephew to the King.*] i. e. to the King in the play then represented. The modern editors, following Mr. Theobald, read — *nephew to the Duke*, — though they have not followed that editor in substituting *Duke and Duchess*, for *King and Queen*, in the dumb show and subsequent entrance. There is no need of departing from the old copies.

MALONE.

P. 74, first l. *You are as good as a chorus,*] The use to which Shakspeare converted the *chorus*, may be seen in *King Henry V.* HENLEY.

P. 74, l. 2. 3. *I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.*] This refers to the interpreter, who formerly sat on the stage at all motions or puppet-shows, and interpreted to the audience.

P. 74, l. 7. *Still better, and worse.*] i. e. better in regard to the wit of your double *entendre*,

but worse in respect to the grossness of your meaning. STEEVENS.

P. 74, l. 8. *So you mistake your husbands.*] Read — *So you must take your husbands; that is, for better, for worse.* JOHNSON.

Mr. Theobald proposed the same reading in his *Shakspeare Restored*, however he lost it afterwards. STEEVENS.

So you mistake your husbands.] I believe this to be right: the word is sometimes used in this ludicrous manner. “Your true trick, rascal, (says Ursula in *Bartholomew Fair*,) must be to be ever busie, and *mistake* away the bottles and cans, before they be half drunk off.” FARMER.

Again, in Ben Jonson’s *Masque of Augurs*: “—— To *mistake* six torches from the chandry, and give them one.” STEEVENS.

I believe the meaning is — you do amiss for yourself to take husbands for the worse. You should take them only for the better. TOLLET.

P. 74, l. 16. *Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,*] The force of the epithet — *midnight*, will be best displayed by a corresponding passage in *Macbeth*: “Root of hemlock, *digg’d i’t the dark.*”

STEEVENS.

P. 74, last l. — a forest of *feathers*,] It appears from Decker’s *Guls Hornebooke*, that feathers were much worn on the stage in Shakspeare’s time. MALONE.

I believe, since the English stage began, feathers were worn by every company of players that could afford to purchase them. STEEVENS.

P. 75, first l. — (*if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me.*)] This expression has oc-

curring already in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and I have met with it in several old comedies.

Perhaps the phrase had its rise from some popular story like that of *Ward* and *Dansiker*, the two famous pirates; an account of whose overthrow was published by A. Barker, 1609; and, in 1612, a play was written on the same subject called *A Christian turn'd Turk*. STEEVENS.

P. 75. l. 2. — *with two Provencial roses on my razed shoes*,] Old copies — *provincial*. Why *provincial* roses? Undoubtedly we should read *Provencial*, or (with the French *c*) *Provençal*. He means roses of *Provence*, a beautiful species of rose, and formerly much cultivated.

T. WARTON.

'They are still more cultivated than any other flower of the same tribe. STEEVENS.

When shoe-strings were worn, they were covered, where they met in the middle, by a ribbon, gathered in the form of a rose. So, in an old song:

"Gil-de-Roy was a bonny boy,
"Had roses tull his shoon." JOHNSON.

These roses are often mentioned by our ancient dramatick writers.

So, in *The Devil's Law-case*, 1623:

"With over blown roses to hide your
gouty ancles."

Again, in *The Roaring Girl*, 1611; "—— many handsome legs in silk stockings have villainous splay-feet, for all their great roses."

The reading of the quartos is *raz'd shoes*; that of the folio *rac'd shoes*. *Razed shoes*, may mean *slashed shoes*, i. e. with cuts or openings in them. The poet might have written *raised shoes*, i. e. shoes with *high heels*; such as by adding to the

stature, are supposed to increase the dignity of a player. In Stubbs's *Anatomie of Abuses*, 1595, there is a chapter on the *corked shoes* in England, "which (he says) beare them up two inches or more from the ground, &c. some of red, blacke, &c. *razed*, carved, cut, and stitched," &c.

Mr. Pope reads — *rayed shoes*, i. e. (as interpreted by Dr. Johnson) "*shoes braided in lines*." Stowe's *Chronicle*, anno 1353, mentions women's hoods *reyed* or striped. *Raie* is the French word for a stripe. Johnson's *Collection of Ecclesiastical Laws* informs us, under the years 1222 and 1353, that in disobedience of the canon, the clergy's shoes were *checquered* with red and green, exceeding long, and variously pinked. STEEVENS.

P. 75, l. 2. 3. — get me a fellowship in a *cry of players*,] Allusion to a pack of hounds.

WARBURTON.

A *pack* of hounds was once called a *cry* of hounds. STEEVENS.

A troop or company of players. MALONE.

P. 75, l. 5. *A whole one, I.*] It should be, I think,

*A whole one; — ay, —
For, &c.*

The actors in our author's time had not annual salaries as at present. The whole receipts of each theatre were divided into shares, of which the proprietors of the theatre, or *house-keepers* as they were called, had some; and each actor had one or more shares, or part of a share, according to his merit. See *The Account of the Ancient Theatres*.

MALONE.

A whole one, I, in familiar language, means no more than — I think myself entitled to a whole one. STEEVENS.

P. 75, l. 6. — O *Damon dear*,] Hamlet calls Horatio by this name, in allusion to the celebrated friendship between *Damon* and *Pythias*. A play on this subject was written by Richard Edwards, and published in 1582. STEEVENS.

The friendship of Damon and Pythias is also enlarged upon in a book that was probably very popular in Shakspeare's youth, Sir Thomas Eliot's *Governour*, 1553. MALONE.

P. 75, l. 7-9. This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here

A very, very — *peacock*.] This alludes to a fable of the birds choosing a King; instead of the eagle, a peacock. POPE.

The old copies have it *paiock*, *paicocke*, and *pajocke*. I substitute *paddock*, as nearest to the traces of the corrupted reading. I have, as Mr. Pope says, been willing to substitute any thing in the place of his *peacock*. He thinks a fable alluded to, of the birds choosing a King; instead of the *eagle*, a *peacock*. I suppose, he must mean the fable of Barlandus, in which it is said, the birds, being weary of their state of anarchy, moved for the setting up of a King; and the *peacock* was elected on account of his gay feathers. But, with submission, in this passage of our Shakspeare, there is not the least mention made of the *eagle* in antithesis to the *peacock*; and it must be by a very uncommon figure, that Jove himself stands in the place of his *bird*. I think, Hamlet is setting his father's and uncle's characters in contrast to each other: and means to say, that by his father's death the state was stripped of a godlike monarch, and that now in his stead reign'd the most despicable poisonous animal that could be; a mere *paddock* or *toad*. *PAD*, *bufo*, *rubeta*

major; a toad. This word I take to be of Hamlet's own substituting. The verses, repeated, seem to be from some old ballad; in which, rhyme being necessary, I doubt not but the last verse ran thus:

A very, very — ass. THEOBALD.

A *peacock* seems proverbial for a fool. Thus, Gascoigne in his *Weeds*:

“A theefe, a cowarde, and a *peacocke*
foole.” FARMER.

In the last scene of this act, Hamlet, speaking of the King, uses the expression which Theobald would introduce:

“Would from a *paddock*, from a bat,
a jib,

“Such dear concernments hide?”

The reading, *peacock*, which I believe to be the true one, was first introduced by Mr. Pope.

Mr. Theobald is unfaithful in his account of the old copies. No copy of authority reads — *paicocke*. The quarto, 1604, has *paiock*; the folio, 1623, *paiocke*.

Shakspeare, I suppose, means, that the King struts about with a false pomp, to which he has no right. See Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1568: “*Pavonnegiare*. To jet up and down, fondly gazing upon himself, as a peacock doth.” MALONE.

P. 75, l. 18. 19. *For if the King like not the
comedy,*

Why then, belike, —] Hamlet was going on to draw the consequence, when the courtiers entered. JOHNSON.

P. 75, l. 19. *Perdy* is a corruption of *par Dieu*, and is not uncommon on the old plays. STEEVENS.

P. 75, l. 29. *With drink,*] Hamlet takes par-

ticular care that his uncle's love of drink shall not be forgotten. JOHNSON.

P. 76, l. 27. — *further trade* —] Further business; further dealing. JOHNSON.

P. 76, l. 29. — *by these pickers and stealers.*] By these hands. JOHNSON.

By these hands, says Dr. Johnson; and rightly. But the phrase is taken from our church catechism, where the catechumen, in his duty to his neighbour, is taught to keep his hands from *picking and stealing*. WHALLEY.

P. 77, first l. *While the grass grows,*] The remainder of this old proverb is preserved in Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578:

“Whylst grass doth growe, oft sterves
the seely steede.”

Hamlet means to intimate, that whilst he is waiting for the succession to the throne of Denmark, he may himself be taken off by death. MALONE.

P. 77, l. 3. *Recorders.*] i. e. a kind of large flute.

To *record* anciently signified to sing or modulate. STEEVENS.

P. 77, l. 4. 5. *To withdraw with you:*] These last words have no meaning, as they stand; yet none of the editors have attempted to amend them. They were probably spoken to the players, whom Hamlet wished to get rid of: — I therefore should suppose that we ought to read, “so, withdraw you;” or, “so withdraw, will you?” M. MASON.

Here Mr. Malone adds the following stage direction: — [*Taking Guildenstern aside.*] But the foregoing obscure words may refer to some gesture which Guildenstern had used, and which, at first was interpreted by Hamlet into a signal for him to attend the speaker into another room. “To

withdraw with you?" (says he) Is that your meaning? But finding his friends continue to move mysteriously about him, he adds, with some resentment, a question more easily intelligible.

STEEVENS.

P. 77, l. 8. 9. — *if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.*] i. e. if my duty to the King makes me press you a little, my love to you makes me still more importunate. If that makes me *bold*, this makes me even *unmannerly*.

WARBURTON.

I believe we should read — *my love is not unmannerly*. My conception of this passage is, that, in consequence of Hamlet's moving to take the recorder, Guildenstern also shifts his ground, in order to place himself *beneath* the Prince in his new position. This Hamlet ludicrously calls "*going about to recover the wind*," &c. and Guildenstern may answer properly enough, I think, and like a courtier; "*if my duty to the King makes me too bold* in pressing you upon a disagreeable subject, *my love to you will make me not unmannerly*, in shewing you all possible marks of respect and attention. TYRWHITT.

P. 77, l. 17. — *ventages* —] The holes of a flute. JOHNSON.

P. 77, l. 18. — *with your fingers ad thumb,*] The first quarto reads — *with your fingers and the umber*. This may probably be the ancient name for that piece of moveable brass at the end of a flute which is either raised or depressed by the finger. The word *umber* is used by Stowe the chronicler, who, describing a single combat between two knights — says, "he brast up his *umber* three times." Here, the *umber* means the visor of the helmet. STEEVENS.

If a *recorder* had a brass key like the *German Flute*, we are to follow the reading of the quarto; for then the thumb is not concerned in the government of the ventages or stops. If a *recorder* was like a *tabourer's pipe*, which has no brass key, but has a stop for the thumb, we are to read — *Govern these ventages with your finger and thumb*. In Cotgrave's Dictionary, *ombre*, *ombraire*, *ombriere*, and *ombrelle*, are all from the Latin *umbra*, and signify a shadow, an umbrella, or any thing that shades or hides the face from the sun; and hence they may have been applied to any thing that hides or covers another; as for example, they may have been applied to the brass key that covers the hole in the German flute. So, Spenser used *umbriere* for the visor of the helmet, as Rous's *History of the Kings of England* uses *umbrella* in the same sense. TOLLET.

P. 77, l. 20. — these are the stops.] The sounds formed by occasionally stopping the holes, while the instrument is played upon. MALONE.

P. 78, l. 3 - 7. *Ham*. Do you see yonder cloud, that's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Ham. Methinks, it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is back'd like a weasel.] This passage has been printed in modern editions thus:

Ham. Methinks, it is like an ouzle, &c.

Pol. It is black like an ouzle.

The first folio reads, — *It is like a weazel*.

Pol. *It is back'd like a weazel* —: and what occasion for alteration there was, I cannot discover. The *weasel* is remarkable for the length of its back; but though I believe a *black weasel* is not easy to be found, yet it is as likely that the cloud

cloud should resemble a *weasel* in shape, as an *ouze* (i. e. black-bird) in colour.

Mr. Tollet observes, that we might read — “it is *beck'd* like a weasel,” i. e. weasel-snouted. So, in *Holinshed's Description of England*, p. 172: “if he be *wesell-becked*.” Quarles uses this term of reproach in his *Virgin Widow*: “Go you *weazel-snouted*, addle-pated,” &c. Mr. Tollet adds, that Milton in his *Lycidas*, calls a promontory *beaked*, i. e. prominent like the *beak* of a bird, or a ship. STEEVENS.

Ham. *Methinks it is like a weazel.*

Pol. *It is back'd like a weazel.*] Thus the quarto, 1604, and the folio. In a more modern quarto, that of 1611, *back'd* the original reading, was corrupted into *black*.

Perhaps in the original edition the words *camel* and *weazel* were shuffled out of their places. The poet might have intended the dialogue to proceed thus:

“Ham. Do you see yonder cloud, that's almost in the shape of a *weazel*?

“Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a weazel, indeed.

“Ham. Methinks, it is like a *camel*.

“Pol. It is back'd like a *camel*.

The protuberant back of a camel seems more to resemble a cloud than the back of a weazel does.

MALONE.

P. 78, l. 11. *They fool me to the top of my bent.*] They compel me to play the fool, till I can endure it no longer. JOHNSON.

Perhaps a term in archery: i. e. as far as the bow will admit of being bent without breaking.

DOUCE.

P. 78, l. 20. 21. *And do such business as the bitter day*

Would quake to look on.] The expression *bitter business* is still in use, and though at present a vulgar phrase, might not have been such in the age of Shakspeare. The *bitter day* is the day rendered hateful or *bitter* by the commission of some act of mischief.

Watts, in his *Logick*, says, "*Bitter* is an equivocal word; there is *bitter* wormwood, there are *bitter* words, there are *bitter* enemies, and a *bitter* cold morning." It is, in short, any thing unpleasing or hurtful. STEEVENS.

P. 78, l. 26. *I will speak daggers to her,*] A similar expression occurs in *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606: "They are pestilent fellows, they speak nothing but *bodkins*." It has been already observed, that a *bodkin* anciently signified a *short dagger*. STEEVENS.

P. 78, l. 28. How in my words soever she be *shent*,] To *shend*, is to reprove harshly, to treat with rough language. STEEVENS.

Shent seems to mean something more than reproof, by the following passage from *The Mirror for Magistrates*: Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, is the speaker, and he relates his having betrayed the Duke of Gloucester and his confederates to the King, "for which (says he) they were all tane and *shent*."

Hamlet surely means, "however my mother may be *hurt*, *wounded*, or *punish'd*, by my words, let me never consent" &c. HENDERSON.

P. 78, l. 29. *To give them seals*] i. e. put them in execution. WARBURTON.

P. 79, l. 6. Out of his *lunes*.] The folio — reads *lunacies*; — and the old quartos — read *brows*.

I take *brows* to be, properly read, *frows*, which, I think, is a provincial word for *perverse humours*; which being, I suppose, not understood, was changed to *lunacies*. But of this I am not confident. JOHNSON.

The two readings of *brows* and *lunes* — when taken in connection with the passages referred to by Mr. Steevens, in *The Winter's Tale* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, plainly figure forth the image under which the King apprehended danger from Hamlet: — viz. that of a bull, which, in his frenzy, might not only gore, but push him from his throne. — “The hazard that hourly grows out of his BROWS” (according to the quartos) corresponds to “*the shoots from the ROUGH PASH,*” [that is *the TUFTED PROTUBERANCE on the head of a bull, from whence his horns spring*] alluded to in *The Winter's Tale*; whilst the imputation of impending danger to “*his LUNES*” (according to the other reading) answers as obviously to the jealous fury of the husband that thinks he has detected the infidelity of his wife. Thus, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: “Why woman, your husband is in his old *lunes* — he so takes on yonder with my husband; so rails against all married mankind; so curses all Eve's daughters, and so buffets himself on the *forehead*, crying peer out! peer out! that any *madness*, I ever yet beheld, seem'd but tameness, civility, and patience, to this distemper he is now in.” HENLEY.

P. 79, l. 32. Behind the arras I'll convey myself,] The arras-hangings in Shakspeare's time, were hung at such

a distance from the walls, that a person might easily stand behind them unperceived. MALONE.

P. 80, l. 4. — *of vantage.*] By some opportunity of secret observation. WARBURTON.

P. 80, l. 11. *Though inclination be as sharp as will;*] Dr. Warburton would read,

Though inclination be as sharp as th' ill.

The old reading is — *as sharp as will.* STEEVENS.

I have followed the easier emendation of Mr. Theobald, received by Sir T. Hanmer: i. e. as *'twill.* JOHNSON.

Will is command, direction. Thus, *Ecclesiasticus*, xliii. 16: “—and at his *will* the south wind bloweth.” The King says, his mind is in too great confusion to pray, even though his *inclination* were as strong as the *command* which requires that duty. STEEVENS.

What the King means to say, is, “That though he was not only *willing* to pray, but strongly *inclined* to it, yet his intention was defeated by his guilt. M. MASON.

P. 80, l. 28. *May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?*] He that does not amend what can be amended, *retains* his *offence.* The King kept the crown from the right heir. JOHNSON.

A similar passage occurs in *Philaster*, where the King, who had usurped the crown of Sicily, and is praying to heaven for forgiveness, says,

“—— But how can I

“Look to be heard of gods, that must be just,

“Praying upon the ground I hold my wrong,” M. MASON.

P. 81, l. 2. *Yet what can it, when one can not repent?]* *What can repentance do for a man that cannot be penitent, for a man who has only part of penitence, distress of conscience, without the other part, resolution of amendment?* JOHNSON.

P. 81, l. 4. *O limed soul;]* This alludes to *bird-lime*. STEEVENS.

P. 81, l. 13. *That would be scann'd:]* i. e. that should be considered, estimated. STEEVENS.

P. 81, l. 18. — *full of bread;]* The uncommon expression, *full of bread*, our poet borrowed from the sacred writings: "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, *fullness of bread*, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." *Ezekiel*, xvi. 49.

MALONE.

P. 81, l. 20. — *how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven?]*

As it appears from the Ghost's own relation that he was in *purgatory*, Hamlet's doubt could only be how long he had to continue there. RITSON.

P. 81, l. 26. *Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:]* To *hent* is used by Shakspeare for, to *seize*, to *catch* to *lay hold on*. *Hent* is, therefore, *hold*, or *seizure*. *Lay hold on* him, sword, at a more horrid time. JOHNSON.

P. 81, l. 32. 33. — *that his soul may be as damn'd, and black,*

As hell, whereto it goes.] This speech, in which Hamlet, represented as a virtuous character, is not content with taking blood for blood, but contrives damnation for the man that he

would punish, is too horrible to be read or to be uttered. JOHNSON.

This speech of Hamlet's, as Johnson observes, is horrible indeed; yet some moral may be extracted from it, as all his subsequent calamities were owing to this savage refinement of revenge.

M. MASON.

That a sentiment so infernal should have met with imitators, may excite surprize; and yet the same fiend-like disposition is shown by Lodowick, in Webster's *White Devil*, or *Vittoria Corombona*, 1612:

"——to have poison'd

"The handle of his racket. O, that,
that! —

"That while he had been bandying at
tennis,

"He might have sworn himself to hell,
and struck

"*His soul* into the hazard!" STEEVENS.

I think it not improbable, that when Shakspeare put this horrid sentiment into the mouth of Hamlet, he might have recollected the following story: "One of these monsters meeting his enemies unarmed, threatned to kill him, if he denied not God, his power, and essential properties, viz. his mercy, suffrance, &c. the which, when the other, desiring life, pronounced with great horror, kneeling upon his knees; the bravo cried out, *nowe will I kill thy body and soule*, and at that instant thrust him through with his rapier." *Brief Discourse of the Spanish State, with a Dialogue annexed intituled Philobasilis*, 4to. 1590, p. 24. REED.

P. 82, l. 14. *I'll silence me even here,] is, I'll use no more words.* JOHNSON.

P. 83, l. 15. — *a rat?*] This (as Dr. Farmer has observed) is an expression borrowed from *The History of Hamblet*, a translation from the French of Belleforest. STEEVENS.

P. 83, l. 27. Queen. *As kill a King!*] This exclamation may be considered as some hint that the Queen had no hand in the murder of Hamlet's father. STEEVENS.

It has been doubted whether Shakspeare intended to represent the Queen as accessory to the murder of her husband. The surprize she here expresses at the charge seems to tend to her exculpation. Where the variation is not particularly marked, we may presume, I think, that the poet intended to tell his story as it had been told before. The following extract therefore from *The History of Hamblet*, bl. 1. relative to this point, will probably not be unacceptable to the reader: "Fengon [the King in the present play] boldened and encouraged by such impunitie, durst venture to couple himself in marriage with her, whom he used as his concubine during good Horvendille's life; in that sort spotting his name with a double vice, incestuous adulterie, and paracide murther. — This adulterer and infamous murtherer slaundered his dead brother, that he would have slaine his wife, and that hee by chance finding him on the point ready to do it, in defense of the lady, had slaine him. — The unfortunate and wicked woman that had received the honour to be the wife of one of the valiantest and wisest Princes in the North, imbased herselfe in such vile sort as to falsifie her faith unto him, and, which is worse, to marrie him that had bin the tyrannous inurtherer of her lawful husband; *which made diverse men think that she had been the cau-*

ser of the murther, thereby to live in her adulterie without controle." *Hist. of Hamb.* sig. C. 1. 2.

In the conference however with her son, on which the present sense is founded, she strongly asserts her innocence with respect to this fact:

"I know well, my sonne, that I have done thee great wrong in marrying with Fengon, the cruel tyrant and murtherer of thy father, and my loyal spouse; but when thou shalt consider the small means of resistance, and the treason of the palace, with the little cause of confidence we are to expect, or hope for, of the courtiers, all wrought to his will; as also the power he made ready, if I should have refused to like him; thou wouldst rather excuse, than accuse me of lasciviousness or inconstancy, much less offer me that wrong *to suspect that ever thy mother Geruth once consented to the death and murther of her husband*: swearing unto thee by the majestie of the gods, that if it had layne in me to have resisted the tyrant, although it had beene with the losse of my blood, yea and of my life, I would surely have saved the life of my lord and husband."

Ibid. sig. D. 4.

It is observable, that in the drama neither the King or Queen make so good a defence. Shakspeare wished to render them as odious as he could, and therefore has not in any part of the play furnished them with even the semblance of an excuse for their conduct.

Though the inference already mentioned may be drawn from the surprize which our poet has here made the Queen express at being charged with the murder of her husband, it is observable that when the player-queen in the preceding scene says,

“In second husband let me be accurst!
 “None wed the second, *but who kill’d*
the first,”

he has made Hamlet exclaim — “*that’s worm-wood.*” The Prince, therefore, both from the expression and the words addressed to his mother in the present scene, must be supposed to think her guilty. — Perhaps after all this investigation, the truth is, that Shakspeare himself meant to leave the matter in doubt. MALONE.

I know not in what part of this tragedy the King and Queen could have been expected to enter into a vindication of their mutual conduct. The former indeed is rendered contemptible as well as guilty; but for the latter our poet seems to have felt all that tenderness which the Ghost recommends to the imitation of her son. STEEVENS.

Had Shakspeare thought fit to have introduced the topicks I have suggested, can there be a doubt concerning his ability to introduce them? The King’s justification, if to justify him had been the poet’s object, (which it certainly was not,) might have been made in a soliloquy; the Queen’s, in the present interview with her son. MALONE.

It might not unappositely be observed, that every new commentator, like Sir T. Hanmer’s Othello, must often “*make the meat he feeds on.*” Some slight objection to every opinion already offered, may be found; and, if in doubtful cases we are to presume that “the poet tells his stories as they have been told before,” we must put new constructions on many of his scenes, as well as new comments on their verbal obscurities.

For instance — touching the manner in which Hamlet disposed of Polonius’s body. The black-letter history tells us he “cut it in pieces, which

he caused to be boiled, and then cast it into an open vault or privie." Are we to conclude therefore that he did so in the play before us, because our author has left the matter doubtful? Hamlet is only made to tell us that this dead counsellor was "safely stowed." He afterwards adds "—— you shall *nose* him" &c.; all which might have been the case, had the direction of the aforesaid history been exactly followed. In this transaction then (which I call a doubtful one, because the remains of Polonius might have been rescued from the *forica*, and afterwards have received their "hugger-mugger" funeral) am I at liberty to suppose he had had the fate of Heliogabalus, *in cloacam missus*?

That the Queen (who may still be regarded as innocent of murder) might have offered some apology for her "over-hasty marriage," can easily be supposed; but Mr. Malone has not suggested what defence could have been set up by the royal fratricide. My acute predecessor, as well as the novellist, must have been aware that though female weakness, and an offence against the forms of the world, will admit of extenuation, such guilt as that of the usurper, could not have been palliated by the dramatick art of Shakspeare; even if the father of Hamlet had been represented as a wicked instead of a virtuous character. STEEVENS.

P. 84, l. 8. 9. — *takes off the rose*

From the fair forehead of an innocent love,] Alluding to the custom of wearing roses on the side of the face. WARBURTON.

I believe Dr. Warburton is mistaken; for it must be allowed that there is a material difference between an ornament worn on the *forehead*, and one

exhibited on *the side of the face*. Some have understood these words to be only a metaphorical enlargement of the sentiment contained in the preceding line:

“ — blurs the grace and *blush* of modesty : ”

but as the *forehead* is no proper situation for a *blush* to be displayed in, we may have recourse to another explanation.

It was once the custom for those who were betrothed, to wear some flower as an external and conspicuous mark of their mutual engagement.

STEEVENS.

I believe, by the *rose* was only meant the *roseate* hue. The forehead certainly appears to us an odd place for the hue of innocence to dwell on, but Shakspeare might place it there with as much propriety as a *smile*. In *Troilus and Cressida* we find these lines:

“So rich advantage of a promis’d glory,
“As *smiles* upon the *forehead* of this
action.”

That part of the forehead which is situated between the eye-brows, seems to have been considered by our poet as the seat of innocence and modesty. So, in a subsequent scene:

“ ——— brands the harlot,
“ Even here, between the *chaste* unsmirch-
ed brow

"Of my true mother." MALONE.

In the foregoing quotation from *Troilus and Cressida*, I understand that the *forehead* is *smiled upon by advantage*, and not that the *forehead* is *itself the smiler*. Thus, says Laertes in the play before us:

“Occasion *smiles upon* a second *leave*.”

But it is not the *leave* that *smiles*, but *occasion* that *smiles upon it*.

In the subsequent passage, our author had no choice; for having alluded to that part of the face which was anciently branded with a mark of shame, he was compelled to place his token of innocence in a corresponding situation. STEEVENS.

P. 84, l. 12. *Contraction for marriage contract.* WARBURTON.

P. 84, l. 14-17. — *Heaven's face doth glow; Yea, this solidity and compound mass, With tristful visage, as against the doom, Is thought-sick at the act.*] If any sense can be found here, it is this. The sun glows [and does it not always?] and the very solid mass of earth has a tristful visage, and is thought-sick. All this is sad stuff. The old quarto reads much nearer to the poet's sense:

*Heaven's face does glow,
O'er this solidity and compound mass,
With heated visage, as against the
doom,*

Is thought-sick at the act.

From whence it appears, that Shakspeare wrote,

*Heaven's face doth glow,
O'er this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage; and, as 'gainst
the doom,*

Is thought-sick at the act.

This makes a fine sense, and to this effect. The sun looks upon our globe, the scene of this murder, with an angry and mournful countenance, half hid in eclipse, as at the day of doom.

WARBURTON.

The word *heated*, though it agrees well enough with *glow*, is, I think, not so striking as *tristful*,

which was, I suppose, chosen at the revisal. I believe the whole passage now stands at the author gave it. Dr. Warturton's reading restores two improprieties, which Shakspeare, by his alteration, had removed. In the first, and in the new reading, *Heaven's face glows with tristful visage*; and, *Heaven's face is thought-sick*. To the common reading there is no just objection. JOHNSON.

I am strongly inclined to think that the reading of the quarto, 1604, is the true one. In Shakspeare's licentious diction, the meaning may be, — The face of heaven doth glow with heated visage over the earth: *and heaven*, as against the day of judgement, is thought-sick at the act.

Had not our poet St. Luke's description of the last day in his thoughts? — "And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring: men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking on those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken," &c. MALONE.

P. 84, l. 18. 19. — *what act,*

That roars so loud, and thunders in the index? The meaning is, — *What is this act, of which the discovery, or mention, cannot be made, but with this violence of clamour?* JOHNSON.

Mr. Edwards observes, that the *indexes* of many old books were at that time inserted at the beginning, instead of the end, as is now the custom. This observation I have often seen confirmed.

So, in *Othello*, Act II. sc. vii: "— an *index* and obscure *prologue* to the history of lust and foul thoughts." STEEVENS.

Bullokar in his *Expositor*, 8vo. 1616, defines

an *Index* by "A *table* in a booke." The *table* was almost always *prefixed* to the books of our poet's age. Indexes, in the sense in which we now understand the word, were very uncommon.

MALONE.

P. 84, l. 20. *Look here, upon this picture, and on this;]* It is evident from the following words,

"*A station*, like the herald Mercury," &c. that these pictures, which are introduced as miniatures on the stage, were meant for whole lengths, being part of the furniture of the Queen's closet.

Hamlet, who, in a former scene, has censured those who gave "forty, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece" for his uncle's "picture in little," would hardly have condescended to carry such a thing in his pocket. STEEVENS.

The introduction of miniatures in this place appears to be a modern innovation. A print prefixed to Rowe's edition of *Hamlet*, published in 1709, proves this. There, the two royal portraits are exhibited as half-lengths, hanging in the Queen's closet; and either thus, or as whole-lengths, they probably were exhibited from the time of the original performance of this tragedy to the death of Betterton. To half-lengths, however, the same objection lies, as to miniatures. MALONE.

We may also learn, that from this print the trick of kicking the chair down on the appearance of the Ghost, was adopted by modern Hamlets from the practice of their predecessors. STEEVENS.

P. 84, l. 24. *Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;]* It is observable that *Hyperion* is used by Spencer with the same error in quantity. FARMER.

P. 84, l. 26. *A station like the herald Mercury,*] *Station* in this instance does not mean *the spot where any one is placed*, but *the act of standing*. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act III. sc. iii.

“Her motion and her station are as one.”

On turning to Mr. Theobald's first edition, I find that he had made the same remark, and supported it by the same instance. The observation is necessary, for otherwise the compliment designed to the attitude of the King, would be bestowed on the place where Mercury is represented as standing.

STEEVENS.

P. 84, l. 33. 34. — like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother.] This alludes to *Pharaoh's Dream*, in the 41st chapter of *Genesis*. STEEVENS.

P. 84, last l. — *batten* —] i. e. to grow fat. *Bat* is an ancient word for *increase*. Hence the adjective *batful*, so often used by Drayton in his *Polyolbion*. STEEVENS.

P. 85, l. 7. Else, could you not have *motion*:] But from what philosophy our editors learnt this, I cannot tell. Since *motion* depends so little upon *sense*, that the greatest part of *motion* in the universe, is amongst bodies devoid of *sense*. We should read:

Else, could you not have notion,
i. e. intellect, reason, &c. This alludes to the famous peripatetic principle of *Nil fit in intellectu, quod non fuerit in sensu*. And how fond our author was of applying, and alluding to, the principles of this philosophy, we have given several instances. The principle in particular has been since taken for the foundation of one of the noblest

works that these latter ages have produced.

WARBURTON.

The whole passage is wanting in the folio; and which soever of the readings be the true one, the poet was not indebted to this boasted philosophy for his choice. STEEVENS.

Sense is sometimes used by Shakspeare for sensation or *sensual appetite*; as *motion* is for the effect produced by the impulse of nature. Such, I think, is the signification of these words here. MALONE.

P. 85, l. 13. — *hoodman-blind?*] This is, I suppose, the same as *blindman's-buff*.

STEEVENS.

P. 85, l. 17. *Could not so mope.*] i. e. could not exhibit such marks of stupidity. STEEVENS.

P. 85, l. 19. *If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,*] To *mutine* for which the modern editors have substituted *mutiny*, was the ancient term, signifying to rise in *mutiny*. MALONE.

P. 85, l. 24. — *reason panders will.*] So, the folio, I think rightly; but the reading of the quarto is defensible:

—*reason pardons will.* JOHNSON.

Panders was certainly Shakspeare's word.

MALONE.

P. 85, l. 27. *And there I see such black and grained spots,*] Died in grain. JOHNSON.

I am not quite certain that the epithet — *grained* is justly interpreted. Our author employs the same adjective in *The Comedy of Errors*:

“Though now this *grained* face of mine
be hid,” &c.

and

and in this instance the allusion is most certainly to the furrows in the *grain* of wood.

Shakspeare might therefore design the Queen to say, that her spots of guilt were not merely superficial, but indented. — A passage, however, in *Twelfth Night*, will sufficiently authorize Dr. Johnson's explanation: "Tis *in grain*, Sir, 'twill endure wind and weather." STEEVENS.

P. 85, l. 28. *As will not leave their tinct.*] To *leave* is to part with, give up, resign.

STEEVENS.

P. 85, l. 30. *In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed;*] Thus the folio: i. e. *greasy* bed. JOHNSON.

Thus also the quarto, 1604. Beaumont and Fletcher use the word *inseamed* in the same sense, in the third of their *Four Plays in One*:

"His leachery *inseam'd* upon him."

In *The Book of Haukyng*, &c. bl. l. no date, we are told that "*Ensayme* of a hauke is *the grece*."

In some places it means hogs' lard, in others, the grease or oil with which clothiers besmear their wool to make it draw out in spinning.

Incestuous is the reading of the quarto, 1611.

STEEVENS.

In the West of England, the *inside fat* of a goose, when dissolved by heat, is called its *seam*.

HENLEY.

P. 86, l. 2. — *a vice of Kings:*] A low mimic of Kings. The vice is the fool of a farce; from whence the modern *punch* is descended.

JOHNSON.

P. 86, l. 4. *That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,*] This is said not unmeaningly, but to show, that the

usurper came not to the crown by any glorious villainy that carried danger with it, but by the low cowardly theft of a common pilferer.

WARBURTON.

P. 86, l. 8. 9. A King

Of shreds and patches:] This is said, pursuing the idea of the *vice of Kings*. The *vice* was dressed as a fool, in a coat of party-coloured patches. JOHNSON.

P. 86, l. 15. *That, laps'd in time and passion,*
lets go &c.] That, having suffered *time to slip*, and *passion to cool*, *lets go, &c.* JOHNSON.

P. 86, l. 22. *Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works;*] *Conceit for imagination.*

P. 86, l. 30. *Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,*] The hairs are excrementitious, that is, without life or sensation; yet those very hairs, as if they had life, start up, &c. POPE.

Not only the hair of animals having neither life nor sensation was called an *excrement*, but the feathers of birds had the same appellation. Thus, in Walton's *Complete Angler*, P. I, c. i. p. 9, edit. 1766: "I will not undertake to mention the several kinds of fowl by which this is done, and his curious palate pleased by day; and which, with their very *excrements*, afford him a soft lodging at night. WHALLEY.

P. 87, l. 1. 2. — *preaching to stones,*
Would make them capable.] *Capable* here signifies *intelligent*; endued with understanding.

We yet use *capacity* in this sense. MALONE.

P. 87, l. 5. *My stern effects:]* *Effects* for actions; deeds *effectea*. MALONE.

P. 87, l. 14. *My father, in his habit as he liv'd!]* If the poet means by this expression, that his father appeared in his own *familiar habit*, he has either forgot that he had originally introduced him in *armour*, or must have meant to vary his dress at this his last appearance. The difficulty might perhaps be a little obviated by pointing the line thus:

My father—in his habit—as he liv'd!

STEEVENS.

A man's armour, who is used to wear it, may be called his *habit*, as well as any other kind of clothing. *As he lived*, probably means — “as if he were alive — as if he lived.” M. MASON.

P. 87, l. 18. *This bodiless creation ecstasy]* *Ecstasy* in this place, and many others, means a temporary alienation of mind, a fit. STEEVENS.

P. 87, l. 33. *And do not spread the compost on the weeds,]* Do not, by any new indulgence, heighten your former offences. JOHNSON.

P. 88, l. 2. — *curb and woo,]* That is, *bend and truckle*. Fr. *courber*. STEEVENS.

P. 88, l. 9. 10. *That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat*

Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this; etc.] This passage is left out in the two elder folios: it is certainly corrupt, and the players did the discreet part to stifle what they did not understand. *Habit's devil* certainly arose from some conceited tamperer with the text, who thought it was necessary, in contrast to *angel*. The emendation in my text I owe to the sagacity of Dr. Thirlby:

That monster custom, who all sense doth eat

Of habit's evil, is angel, &c. THEOBALD.

I think Thirlby's conjecture wrong, though the succeeding editors have followed it; *angel* and *devil* are evidently opposed. JOHNSON.

I incline to think with Dr. Thirlby; though I have left the text undisturbed. From *That monster* to *put on*, is not in the folio. MALONE.

I would read — *Or habit's devil*. The poet first styles *Custom* a *monster*, and may aggravate and amplify his description by adding, that it is the "daemon who presides over habit." — That monster custom, or habit's devil, is yet an angel in this particular. STEEVENS.

P. 88, l. 23. *To punish me with this, and this with me,]* To punish me by making me the instrument of this man's death, and to punish this man by my hand. For this, the reading of both the quarto, and folio, Sir T. Hanmer and the subsequent editors have substituted,

To punish him with me, and me with him. MALONE.

I take leave to vindicate the last editor of the octavo Shakspeare from any just share in the foregoing accusation. Whoever looks into the edition 1785, will see the line before us printed exactly as in this and Mr. Malone's text. — In several preceding instances a similar censure on the same gentleman has been as undeservedly implied.

STEEVENS.

P. 88, l. 32. — *the bloat King]* i. e. the swollen King. MALONE.

This again hints at his intemperance. He had already drank himself into a dropsy.

BLACKSTONE.

The folio reads — *blunt* King. HENDERSON.

P. 88, l. 33. *Mouse* was once a term of endearment. STEEVENS.

This term of endearment is very ancient.

MALONE.

P. 88, l. 34. — for a pair of *reechy* kisses,]
Reechy is smoky. The author meant to convey a coarse idea, and was not very scrupulous in his choice of an epithet. The same, however, is applied with greater propriety to the neck of a cook-maid in *Coriolanus*. STEEVENS.

Reechy properly means *steaming with exsudation*, and seems to have been selected, to convey, in this place, its grossest import. HENLEY.

Reechy includes, I believe, *heat* as well as smoke. The verb to *reech*, which was once common, was certainly a corruption of — to *reek*. In a former passage Hamlet has remonstrated with his mother, on her living

“In the *rank sweat* of an enseamed bed.” MALONE.

P. 89, l. 1. 2. *That I essentially am not in madness,*

But mad in craft.] The reader will be pleased to see Dr. Farmer's extract from the old quarto *Historie of Hamblet*, of which he had a fragment only in his possession. — “It was not without cause, and just occasion, that my gestures, countenances, and words, seeme to proceed from a madman, and that I desire to haue all men esteeme mee wholly deprived of sense and reasonable understanding, bycause I am well assured, that he that hath made no conscience to kill his owne brother, (accustomed to murthers, and allured with desire of gouernement without controll in his treasons) will not spare to saue himselfe with

the like crueltie, in the blood and flesh of the loyns of his brother, by him massacred: and therefore it is better for me to fayne madnesse, then to use my right sences as nature hath bestowed them upon me. The bright shining clearnes thereof I am forced to hide vnder this shadow of dissimulation, as the sun doth hir beams under some great cloud, when the wether in summer-time ouercasteth: the face of a madman serueth to couer my gallant countenance, and the gestures of a fool are fit for me, to the end that, guiding myself wisely therin, I may preserue my life for the Danes and the memory of my late deceased father; for that the desire of reuenging his death is so ingraven in my heart, that if I dye not shortly, I hope to take such and so great vengeance, that these countreyes shall for euer speake thereof. Neuerthelesse I must stay the time, meanes, and occasion, lest by making ouergreat hast, I be now the cause of mine own sodaine ruine and ouerthrow, and by that meanes end, before I beginne to effect my hearts desire: hee that hath to doe with a wicked, d'sloyall, cruel, and discourteous man, must vse craft, and politike inuentions, such as a fine witte can best imagine, not to discouer his interprise; for seeing that by force I cannot effect my desire, reason alloweth me by dissimulation, subtiltie, and secret practises to proceed therein." STEEVENS.

P. 89, l. 4. *Gib* was a common name for a cat. STEEVENS.

P. 89, l. 7-10. *Unpeg the basket on the house's top,*

Let the birds fly &c.] Sir John Suckling, in one of his letters, may possibly allude to the same story; "It is the story of the *jackanapes* and the partridges; thou starest after a beauty till

it be lost to thee, and then let'st out another, and starest after that till it is gone too." WARNER.

P. 89, l. 9. To try *conclusions*,] i. e. experiments. STEEVENS.

P. 89, l. 15. Ham. *I must to England*;] Shakspeare does not inform us how Hamlet came to know that he was to be sent to England. Rosen-crantz and Guildenstern were made acquainted with the King's intentions for the first time in the very last scene; and they do not appear to have had any communication with the Prince since that time. Add to this, that in a subsequent scene, when the King, after the death of Polonius, informs Hamlet he was to go to England, he expresses great surprize, as if he had not heard any thing of it before. — This last, however, may, perhaps, be accounted for, as contributing to his design of passing for a madman. MALONE.

P. 89, l. 20. Whom I will trust, as I will *adders fang'd*,] That is, adders with their *fangs* or *poisonous teeth*, undrawn. It has been the practice of mountebanks to boast the efficacy of their antidotes by playing with vipers, but they first disabled their fangs. JOHNSON.

P. 89, l. 24. *Hoist*, for *hoised*; as *past*, for *passed*. STEEVENS.

P. 89, l. 27. *When in one line two crafts directly meet*.] Still alluding to a *countermine*. MALONE.

P. 89, l. 29. *I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room*:] The word *guts* was not anciently so offensive to delicacy as it is at present; but was used by Lyly (who made the *first* attempt to polish our language) in his serious compositions. STEEVENS.

P. 89, l. 33. — *to draw toward an end with you:]* Shakspeare has been unfortunate in his management of the story of this play, the most striking circumstances of which arise so early in its formation, as not to leave him room for a conclusion suitable to the importance of its beginning. After this last interview with the Ghost, the character of Hamlet has lost all its consequence. STEEVENS.

P. 90, first l. This play is printed in the old editions without any separation of the acts. The division is modern and arbitrary; and is here not very happy, for the pause is made at a time when there is more continuity of action than in almost any other of the scenes. JOHNSON.

P. 90, l. 27. 28. — *out af haunt,]* I would rather read, — *out of harm.* JOHNSON.

Out of haunt, means out of company.

STEEVENS.

P. 91, l. 1-3. *O'er whom his very madness,
like some ore,*

Among a mineral of metals base,

Shows itself pure;] Shakspeare seems to think *ore* to be *or*, that is, gold. Base metals have *ore* no less than precious. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare uses the general word *ore* to express gold, because it was the most excellent of ores. — I suppose we should read “*of metal base*” instead of *metals*, which much improves the construction of the passage. M. MASON.

A *mineral* Minsheu defines in his Dictionary, 1617, “Any thing that grows in mines, and contains metals.” Shakspeare seems to have used the word in this sense, — for a rude mass of metals. MALONE.

Minerals are mines. So, in *The Golden Ro-*

mains of Hales of Eton, 1693, p. 34: "Controversies of the times, like spirits in the *minerals*, with all their labour, nothing is done." STEEVENS.

P. 91, l. 18. — *so, haply, slander, &c.*] Neither these words, nor the following three lines and an half, are in the folio. In the quarto, 1604, and all the subsequent quartos, the passage stands thus:

"— And what's untimely done.

"Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter," &c.

P. 91, l. 20. As level as the cannon to his *blank*,] The *blank* was the white mark at which shot or arrows were directed. STEEVENS.

P. 92, l. 18. 19. *He keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw;*] The quarto has *apple*, which is generally followed. The folio has *ape*, which Sir T. Hanmer has received, and illustrated with the following note:

"It is the way of monkeys in eating, to throw that part of their food, which they take up first, into a couch they are provided with on each side of their jaw, and there they keep it, till they have done with the rest." JOHNSON.

Surely this should be "like an *ape*, an *apple*."

FARMER.

The reading of the folio, *like an ape*, I believe to be the true one, because Shakspeare has the same phraseology in many other places. The word *ape* refers to the King, not to his courtiers. *He keeps them like an ape, in the corner of his jaw, &c.* means, he keeps them, as an ape keeps food, in the corner of his jaw, &c.

That the particular food in Shakspeare's contemplation was an *apple*, may be inferred from the

following passage in *The Captain*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

“And lie, and kiss my hand unto my
mistress,

“As often as *an ape does for an apple.*”

I cannot approve of Dr. Farmer's reading. Had our poet meant to introduce both the ape and the apple, he would, I think, have written not *like*, but “*as an ape an apple.*” MALONE.

Apple in the quarto is a mere typographical error. RITSON.

P. 92, l. 24. 25. *A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.*] This, if I mistake not, is a proverbial sentence. MALONE.

Since the appearance of our author's play, these words have become proverbial; but no earlier instance of the idea conveyed by them, has occurred within the compass of my reading. STEEVENS.

P. 92, l. 28. 29. *The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body.*] This answer I do not comprehend. Perhaps it should be, — *The body is not with the King, for the King is not with the body.* JOHNSON.

Perhaps it may mean this, — The body is in the King's house, (i. e. the present King's,) yet the King (i. e. he who should have been King,) is not with the body. Intimating that the usurper is here, the true King in a better place. Or it may mean — *the guilt of the murder lies with the King*, but the King is *not where the body lies*. The affected obscurity of Hamlet must excuse so many attempts to procure something like a meaning. STEEVENS.

P. 92, last but one l. *Of nothing:*] Should it not be read — *Or nothing?* When the courtiers remark that Hamlet has contemptuously called the

King a thing, Hamlet defends himself by observing, that the King must be a *thing*, or *nothing*.

JOHNSON.

The text is right. So, in *The Spanish Tragedy*:

“In troth, my Lord, it is a *thing* of
nothing.”

And, in one of Harvey's letters “a silly bug-beare, a sorry puffle of winde, a *thing* of *nothing*.”

FARMER.

Mr. Steevens has given [i. e. edit. 1778] many parallelisms: but the origin of all is to be look'd for, I believe, in the 144th Psalm, ver. 5: “Man is like a *thing* of nought.” Mr. Steevens must have observed, that the book of Common Prayer, and the translation of the Bible into English, furnished our old writers with many forms of expression, some of which are still in use. WHALLEY.

P. 92, last l. *Hide fox, and all after.*] There is a play among children called, *Hide fox, and all after*. HANMER.

P. 94, l. 10. 11. *Nothing, but to show you how a King may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.*] Alluding to the royal journeys of state, always styled *progresses*; a familiar idea to those who, like our author, lived during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I.

STEEVENS.

P. 94, l. 27. The bark is ready, and the wind
at *help*,] I suppose it
should be read,

*The bark is ready, and the wind at
helm.* JOHNSON.

——at *help*,] i. e. at hand, ready, — ready to help or assist you. RITSON.

P. 95, l. 14. 15. — *thou may'st not coldly set*

Our sovereign process:] I adhere to the reading of the quarto and folio. Mr. M. Mason observes, that "one of the common acceptations of the verb *set*, is to value or estimate; as we say to *set* at nought; and in that sense it is used here,"

STEEVENS.

Our poet has here, I think, as in many other places, used an elliptical expression: "thou may'st not coldly set *by* our sovereign process;" thou may'st not *set little by it*, or estimate it lightly. "*To set by.*" Cole renders in his Dict. 1679, by *aestimo*. "*To set little by,*" he interprets *parvi-facio*. See many other instances of similar ellipses, in Vol. XIII. p. 235, n. 5. MALONE.

P. 95, l. 16. *By letters conjuring to that effect,*] *Effect* was formerly used for *act* or *deed*, simply, and is so used in the line before us. MALONE.

P. 95, l. 20. Howe'er my *haps*, my joys *will ne'er begin.*] This being the termination of a scene, should according to our authors's custom, be rhymed. Perhaps he wrote,

Howe'er my hopes, my joys are not begun.
If *haps* be retained, the meaning will be, 'till I know 'tis done, I shall be miserable, whatever befall me. JOHNSON.

The folio reads, in support of Dr. Johnson's remark, —

Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

Mr. Heath would read:

Howe'er 't may hap, my joys will ne'er begin. STEEVENS.

By his *haps*, he means his *successes*. His fortune was begun, but his joys were not. M. MASON.

P. 95, l. 30. *We shall express our duty in his eye,*] The phrase appears to have been formulary. See *The Establishment of the Household of Prince Henry*, A. D. 1610: "Also the gentleman-usher shall be careful to see and informe all such as doe service *in the Prince's eye*, that they performe their duties" &c. Again, in *The Regulations for the Government of the Queen's Household*, 1627: "——all such as doe service *in the Queen's eye*." STEEVENS.

P. 96, last l. —— *What is a man, If his chief good, and market of his time, Be but to sleep, and feed?*] If his highest good, and *that for which he sells his time*, be to sleep and feed. JOHNSON.

Market, I think, here means *profit*. MALONE.

P. 97, l. 2. 3. — with *such large discourse, Looking before, and after,*] Such latitude of comprehension, such power of reviewing the past, and anticipating the future. JOHNSON.

P. 97, l. 6. — *some craven scruple*] Some cowardly scruple. MALONE.

P. 97, l. 21–24. — *Rightly to be great, Is, not to stir without great argument; But greatly to find quarrel in a straw, When honour's at the stake.*] This passage I have printed according to the copy. Mr. Theobald had regulated it thus:

——'Tis not to be great,
Never to stir without great argument;
But greatly, &c.

The sentiment of Shakspeare is partly just, and partly romantick.

—— *Rightly to be great,
Is, not to stir without great argument;*

is exactly philosophical,

*But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
When honour's at the stake,*

is the idea of a modern hero. *But then*, says he, *honour is an argument, or subject of debate, sufficiently great, and when honour is at stake, we must find cause of quarrel in a straw.*

JOHNSON.

P. 97, l. 26. *Excitements of my reason, and
my blood,]* Provocations which excite both my reason and my passions to vengeance. JOHNSON.

P. 97, l. 30. — *a plot]* A piece, or portion.

REED.

P. 97, l. 32. — *not tomb enough, and* continent, *]* *Continent*, in our author, means that which comprehends or encloses. STEEVENS.

Again, Lord Bacon *on the Advancement of Learning*, 4to. 1633, p. 7: “——if there be no fulnesse, then is the *continent* greater than the content.” REED.

P. 98, l. 12. *Spurns enviously at straws;]* *Envy* is much oftener put by our poet (and those of this time) for direct *aversion*, than for *malignity conceived at the sight of another's excellence or happiness*. STEEVENS.

P. 98, l. 13-15. — her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers *to collection;* *]* i. e. to deduce consequences from such premises; or as Mr. M. Mason observes, “endeavour to collect some meaning from them.” STEEVENS.

P. 98, l. 19-21. — there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much *unhappily.* *]*
i. e. though her meaning cannot be certainly col-

lected, yet there is enough to put a mischievous interpretation to it. **WARBURTON.**

That *unhappy* once signified *mischievous*, may be known from P. Holland's translation of *Pliny's Natural History*, Book XIX. ch. vii.: "——the shrewd and *unhappie* foules which lie upon the lands, and eat up the seed new sowne." We still use *unlucky* in the same sense. **STEEVENS.**

P. 98, l. 22 et fol. Queen. *'Twere good, &c.]* These lines are given to the Queen in the folio, and to Horatio in the quarto. **JOHNSON.**

I think the two first lines of Horatio's speech [*'Twere good, &c.]* belong to him; the rest to the Queen. **BLACKSTONE.**

In the quarto, the Queen, Horatio, and a *Gentleman*, enter at the beginning of this scene. The two speeches, "She is importunate," &c. and "She speaks much of her father," &c. are there given to the *Gentleman*, and the line now before us, as well as the two following, to *Horatio*: the remainder of this speech to the Queen. I think it probable that the regulation proposed by Sir W. Blackstone was that intended by Shakspeare. **MALONE.**

P. 98, l. 27. Each *toy*] is, each trifle.

MALONE.

P. 99, first l. et fol. There is no part of this play in its representation on the stage, more pathetic than this scene; which, I suppose, proceeds from the utter insensibility Ophelia has to her own misfortunes.

A great sensibility, or none at all, seems to produce the same effect. In the latter the audience supply what she wants, and with the former they sympathize. **Sir J. REYNOLDS.**

P. 99, l. 3. 4. *By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.]* This is the

description of a pilgrim. While this kind of devotion was in favour, love-intrigues were carried on under that mask. Hence the old ballads and novels made pilgrimages the subjects of their plots. The cockle-shell hat was one of the essential badges of this vocation: for the chief places of devotion being beyond sea, or on the coasts, the pilgrims were accustomed to put cockle-shells upon their hats, to denote the intention or performance of their devotion. WARBURTON.

P. 99, l. 18. *Larded all with sweet flowers;*] The expression is taken from cookery. JOHNSON.

P. 99, l. 22. *God'ield you!*] i. e. Heaven reward you! THEOBALD.

P. 99, l. 22. 23. — *the owl was a baker's daughter.*] This was a metamorphosis of the common people, arising from the mealy appearance of the owl's feathers, and her guarding the *bread* from mice.

WARBURTON.

To guard the bread from mice, is rather the office of a cat than an owl. In barns and granaries, indeed, the services of the owl are still acknowledged. This was, however, no metamorphosis of the common people, but a legendary story, which both Dr. Johnson and myself have read, yet in what book at least I cannot recollect. — Our Saviour being refused bread by the daughter of a baker, is described as punishing her by turning her into an owl. STEEVENS.

This is a common story among the vulgar in Gloucestershire, and is thus related: "Our Saviour went into a baker's shop where they were baking, and asked for some bread to eat. The mistress of the shop immediately put a piece of dough into the oven to bake for him; but was reprimanded by

by her daughter, who insisting that the piece of dough was too large, reduced it to a very small size. The dough, however, immediately afterwards began to swell, and presently became of a most enormous size. Whereupon, the baker's daughter cried out, "Heugh, heugh, heugh," which owl-like noise probably induced our Saviour, for her wickedness, to transform her into that bird." This story is often related to children, in order to deter them from such illiberal behaviour to poor people.

Douce.

P. 99, l. 29 - 32. *Good morrow, 'tis Saint
Valentine's day,*

*All this morning betime,
'And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine:] Old copies:
To-morrow is, &c.*

The correction is Dr. Farmer's. STEEVENS.

There is a rural tradition, that about this time of year birds choose their mates. Bourne, in his *Antiquities of the Common People*, observes, that "it is a ceremony never omitted among the vulgar, to draw lots, which they term *Valentines*, on the *eve* before Valentine-day. The names of a select number of one sex are by an equal number of the other put into some vessel; and after that every one draws a name, which for the present is called their *Valentine*, and is also looked upon as a good omen of their being man and wife afterwards." Mr. Brand adds, that he has "searched the legend of St. Valentine, but thinks there is no occurrence in his life, that could give rise to this ceremony." MALONE.

P. 100, first line. — *and don'd his cloathes,]*
To *don*, is to *do on*, to put on, as *doff* is to *do off*, put off. STEEVENS.

P. 100, l. 2. *And dupp'd the chamber door;]*
To dup, is to *do up*; to lift the latch. It were
 easy to write, — *And op'd* —. JOHNSON.

To dup, was a common contraction of to *do up*.
 The phrase seems to have been adopted either
 from *doing up the latch*, or drawing up the *port-*
cullis. STEEVENS.

P. 100, l. 8. By *Gis*, and by *Saint Charity*,]
 I rather imagine it should be read,

By Cis, —

That is, by St. Cecily. JOHNSON.

Saint Charity is a known saint among the Ro-
 man Catholics. Spenser mentions her, Eclog.
 V. 255:

“Ah dear Lord, and sweet *Saint Cha-*
rity!”

I find, by *Gisse*, used as an adjuration, both
 by Gascoigne in his *Poems*, by Preston in his
Cambyses, and in the comedy of *See me, and see*
me not, 1618. STEEVENS.

In the scene between the Bastard Faulconbridge
 and the friars and nunne in the First Part of *The*
troublesome Raigne of King John, (edit. 1779,
 p. 256. &c.) the nunne swears by *Gis*, and the
 friars pray to *Saint Withold* (another obsolete
 saint mentioned in *King Lear*) and adjure him
 by *Saint Charitie* to hear them. BLACKSTONE.

There is not the least mention of any saint whose
 name corresponds with *Gis*, either in the *Roman*
Calendar, the service in *Usum Sacrum*, or in the
Benedictionary of Bishop Athelwold. I believe
 the word to be only a corrupted abbreviation of
Jesus, the letters J. H. S. being anciently all that
 was set down to denote that sacred name, on al-
 tars, the covers of books, &c. RIDLEY.

Though *Gis* may be, and I believe is, only a

contraction of *Jesus*, there is certainly a Saint *Gislen*, with whose name it corresponds.

RITSON.

P. 100, l. 11. By *cock*,] This is likewise a corruption of the sacred name. STEEVENS.

P. 100, l. 22. *Come, my coach!*] In Marlow's *Tamburlaine*, 1590, Zabina in her frenzy uses the same expression, "*Hell, make ready my coach, my chair, my jewels, I come, I come.*" MALONE.

P. 100, l. 29. 30. *When sorrows come, they
come not single spies,
But in battalions!*] In Ray's *Proverbs* we find, "Misfortunes seldom come alone," as a proverbial phrase. REED.

P. 101, l. 1. 2. — we have done *but greenly*,] But *unskilfully*; with *greenness*; that is, without maturity of judgement. JOHNSON.

P. 101, l. 3. *In hugger-mugger to inter him:*] All the modern editions that I have consulted, give it,

In private to inter him;—

That the words now replaced are better, I do not undertake to prove; it is sufficient that they are Shakspeare's: if phraseology is to be changed as words grow uncouth by disuse, or gross by vulgarity, the history of every language will be lost; we shall no longer have the words of any author; and, as these alterations will be often unskilfully made, we shall in time have very little of his meaning. JOHNSON.

P. 101, l. 8. *Feeds on his wonder,*] The folio reads,

Keeps on his wonder,—

The quarto,

Feeds on this wonder,—

Thus the true reading is picked out from between them. Sir T. Hanmer reads unnecessarily,

Feeds on his anger, ——. JOHNSON.

P. 101, l. 11 - 13. *Wherein necessity, of matter
beggar'd,*

*Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear.]* Sir T. Hanmer reads,

Whence animosity, of matter beggar'd.

He seems not to have understood the connection.

*Wherein, that is, in which pestilent speeches,
necessity, or, the obligation of an accuser to
support his charge, will nothing stick, &c.*

JOHNSON.

P. 101, l. 13 - 15. — — — this

Like to a murdering-piece, in many places

Gives me superfluous death!] Such a piece

as assassins use, with many barrels. It is necessary to apprehend this, to see the justness of the similitude. WARBURTON.

It appears from a passage in Smith's *Sea Grammar*, 1627, that it was a piece of ordnance used in ships of war: "A case-shot is any kinde of small bullets, nailes, old iron, or the like, to put into the case, to shoot out of the ordnances or *murderers*; these will doe much mischief, " &c.

STEEVENS.

A *murdering-piece* was the specifick term in Shakspeare's time, for a piece of ordnance, or small cannon. The word is found in Cole's Latin Dictionary, 1679, and rendered, "*tormentum murale.*"

The small cannon, which are, or were used in the forecastle, half-deck or steerage of a ship of war, were within this century, called *murdering-pieces*. MALONE.

Perhaps what is now, from the manner of it,

called a *swivel*. It is mentioned in Sir T. Roes *Voiage to the E. Indies*, at the end of Della Valle's *Travels*, 1665: "——the East India Company had a very little pinnace...mann'd she was with ten men', and had only one small *murdering-piece* within her." Probably it was never charged with a single ball, but always with shot, pieces of old iron," &c. RITSON.

P. 101, l. 19. Where are my *Switzers*?] I have observed in many of our old plays, that the guards, attendant on Kings, are called *Switzers*, and that without any regard to the country where the scene lies. REED.

The reason is, because the Swiss in the time of our poet, as at present, were hired to fight the battles of other nations. MALONE.

P. 101, l. 22. The ocean overpeering of his
list,] The lists are the barriers which the spectators of a tournament must not pass. JOHNSON.

List, in this place, only signifies *boundary*, i. e. the shore.

The *selvage* of cloth was in both places, I believe, in our author's thoughts. MALONE.

P. 101, l. 25 - 29. — *The rabble call him Lord;
And as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry, Choose we; Laertes shall be
King!*] By *word* is

here meant a *declaration*, or proposal. It is determined to this sense, by the inference it hath to what had just preceded:

"The rabble call him Lord," &c.

This acclamation, which is the *word* here spoken of, was made without regard to antiquity, or re-

ceived custom, whose occurrence, however, is necessarily required to confer validity and stability in every proposal of this kind. HEATH.

Sir T. Hanmer would transpose this line and the next. Dr. Warburton proposes to read, *ward*; and Dr. Johnson, *weal*, instead of *word*. I should be rather for reading *work*. TYRWHITT.

In the first folio there is only a comma at the end of the above line; and will not the passage bear this construction? — The rabble call him Lord, and as if the world were now but to begin, and as if the ancient custom of hereditary succession were unknown, they, the ratifiers and props of *every word he utters*, cry, — Let us make choice, that Laertes shall be King. TOLLET.

This *construction* might certainly be admitted, and *the ratifiers and props of every word* might be understood to be applied to the *rabble* mentioned in a preceding line, without Sir T. Hanmer's transposition of this and the following line; but there is no authority for what Mr. Tollet adds, "of every word *he* [Laertes] *utters*," for the poet has not described Laertes as having uttered a word. If therefore the rabble are called *the ratifiers and props of every word*, we must understand, "of every word *uttered by themselves*:" which is so tame, that it would be unjust to our poet to suppose that to have been his meaning. *Ratifiers*, &c. refer not to the people, but to custom and *antiquity*, which the speaker says are the true ratifiers and props of every word. The last word, however, of the line may well be suspected to be corrupt; and Mr. Tyrwhitt has probably suggested the true reading. MALONE.

P. 101, last but one l. *O, this is counter, you
false Danish dogs.]*

Hounds run *counter* when they trace the trail backwards. JOHNSON.

P. 102, l. 15. — *between the chaste unsmirched brow,*] i. e. clean, not defiled. To *besmirch*, our author uses, Act I. sc. v. and again in *K. Henry V.* Act. V. sc. iii.

This seems to be an allusion to a proverb often introduced in the old comedies. Thus, in *The London Prodigal*, 1605: “—as true as the skin between any man’s brows.” STEEVENS.

P. 104, l. 3–5. *Nature is fine in love: and, where ’tis fine,*

*It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.*] These lines are not in the quarto, and might have been omitted in the folio without great loss, for they are obscure and affected; but, I think, they require no emendation. *Love* (says Laertes) is the passion by which *nature is most exalted and refined*; and as substances, *refined* and subtilised, easily obey any impulse, or follow any attraction, some part of nature, so purified and *refined*, flies off after the attracting object, after the thing it loves:

“As into air the purer spirits flow,

“And separate from their kindred dregs
below,

“So flew her soul.” JOHNSON.

The meaning of the passage may be — That her wits, like the spirit of fine essences, flew off or evaporated. *Fine*, however, sometimes signifies *artful*. STEEVENS.

P. 104, l. 7. *Hey no nonny, nonny hey nonny:*] These words, which were the burthen of a song, are found only in the folio. MALONE.

P. 104, l. 14 – 16. *O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.*] The story alluded to I do not know; but perhaps the lady stolen by the steward was reduced to *spin*. JOHNSON.

The *wheel* may mean no more than *the burthen of the song*, which she had just repeated, and as such was formerly used. I met with the following observation in an old quarto black-letter book, published before the time of Shakspeare:

“The song was accounted a good one, though it was not moche graced by the *wheele*, which in no wise accorded with the subject matter thereof.”

I quote this from memory, and from a book, of which I cannot recollect the exact title or date; but the passage was in a preface to some songs or sonnets. I well remember, to have met with the word in the same sense in other old books.

Rota, indeed, as I am informed, is the ancient musical term in Latin, for the burden of a song. Dr. Farmer, however, has just favoured me with a quotation from Nicholas Breton's *Toyes of an idle Head*, 1577, which at once explains the word *wheel* in the sense for which I have contended:

“That I may sing, full merrily,

“Not heigh ho *wele*, but care away!”

i. e. not with a melancholy, but a cheerful burthen.

I formerly supposed that the ballad, alluded to by Ophelia, was that entered on the books of the Stationers' Company; “October 1580. Four ballades of the Lord of Lorn and the *False Steward*, &c. but Mr. Ritson assures me there is no corresponding *theft* in it. STEEVENS.

I am inclined to think that *wheel* is here used in its ordinary sense, and that these words allude

to the occupation of the girl who is supposed to sing the song alluded to by Ophelia.

A musical antiquary may perhaps contend, that the controverted words of the text allude to an ancient instrument mentioned by Chaucer, and called by him a *rote*, by others a *vielle*; which was played upon by the friction of a *wheel*.

MALONE.

P. 104, l. 18-20. *There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.*] There is probably some mythology in the choice of these herbs, but I cannot explain it. *Pansies* is for *thoughts*, because of its name, *Pensees*; but why *rosemary* indicates *remembrance*, except that it is an ever-green, and carried at funerals, I have not discovered. JOHNSON.

Rosemary was anciently supposed to strengthen the memory, and was not only carried at funerals, but worn at weddings. STEEVENS.

Rosemary being supposed to strengthen the memory, was the emblem of fidelity in lovers.

MALONE.

P. 104, l. 23. *There's fennel for you, and columbines:*] Greene, in his *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, 1620, calls *fennel*, *women's weeds*: "fit generally for that sex, sith while they are maidens, they wish wantonly."

I know not of what *columbines* were supposed to be emblematical. They are again mentioned in *All Fools*, by Chapman, 1605:

"What's that? — a *columbine*?"

"No: that *thankless* flower grows not in my garden."

Gerard, however, and other herbalists, impute few, if any, virtues to them; and they may there-

fore be styled *thankless*, because they appear to make no grateful return for their creation.

From the *Caltha Poetarum*, 1599, it should seem as if this flower was the emblem of cuckoldom:

“——the blue *cornuted* columbine,
“Like to the crooked horns of Acheloy.”

STEEVENS.

Columbine was an emblem of cuckoldom, on account of the horns of its nectaria, which are remarkable in this plant. See *Aquilegia*, in Linnaeus's *Genera*, 684. S. W.

The columbine was emblematical of forsaken lovers:

“The *columbine* in tawny often taken,
“Is then ascribed to such as are for-
saken.”

Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*,
Book I. Song ii. 1613.

HOLT WHITE.

Ophelia gives her fennel and columbines to the *King*. In the collection of Sonnets quoted above, the former is thus mentioned:

“*Fennel* is for flatterers,
“An evil thing 'is sure;
“But I have alwaies meant truely,
“With constant heart most pure.”

MALONE.

P. 104, l. 24. 25. *there's rue for you; and here's some for me: — we may call it, herb of grace o'sundays.*] I believe there is a quibble meant in this passage; *rue* anciently signifying the same as *Ruth*, i. e. sorrow. Ophelia gives the Queen some, and keeps a proportion of it for herself.

Herb of grace is one of the titles which *Tucca*

gives to *William Rufus*, in Decker's *Satiromastix*. I suppose the first syllable of the surname *Rufus* introduced the quibble. STEEVENS.

The following passage from Greene's *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, will furnish the best reason for calling *rue* herb of grace o'sundays: "— some of them smil'd and said, *Rue* was called *Herbe-grace*, which though they scorned in their youth, they might wear in their age, and that it was never too late to say *miserere*." HENLEY.

Herb of grace was not the *sunday name*, but the *every day* name of *rue*. In the common dictionaries of Shakspeare's time it is called *herb of grace*. There is no ground therefore for supposing, with Dr. Warburton, that *rue* was called herb of grace, from its being used in exorcisms performed in churches on Sundays.

Ophelia only means, I think, that the Queen may with peculiar propriety on *Sundays*, when she solicits pardon for that crime which she has so much occasion to *rue* and repent of, call her *rue*, *herb of grace*.

Ophelia, after having given the Queen *rue* to remind her of the *sorrow* and *contrition* she ought to feel for her incestuous marriage, tells her, she may wear it with a *difference*, to distinguish it from that worn by *Ophelia* herself; because her tears flowed from the loss of a father, those of the Queen ought to flow for her guilt." MALONE.

P. 104, l. 26. — *you may wear your rue with a difference.* —] This seems to refer to the rules of heraldry, where the younger brothers of a family bear the same arms *with a difference*, or mark of distinction.

There may, however, be somewhat more implied here than is expressed. *You, Madam*, (says

Ophelia to the Queen,) may call your RUE by its Sunday name, HERB OF GRACE, and so wear it with a difference to distinguish it from mine, which can never be any thing but merely RUE, i. e. sorrow. STEEVENS.

P. 104, l. 27. There's a daisy.] Greene, in his *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, has explained the significance of this flower: "—— Next them grew the DISSEMBLING DAISIE, to warne such light of-love wenches not to trust every faire promise that such amorous bachelors make them."

HENLEY.

P. 104, l. 27. 28. *I would give you some violets; but they wither'd all, when my father died:]* The violet is thus characterized in the old collection of Sonnets above quoted, printed in 1584:

"Violet is for faithfulnessse,

"Which in me shall abide;

"Hoping likewise that from your heart

"You will not let it slide." MALONE.

P. 104, l. 30. *For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy, —]* This is part of an old song, mentioned likewise by Beaumont and Fletcher, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Act IV. sc. i:

"—— I can sing the broom,

"And Bonny Robin." STEEVENS.

P. 104, l. 32. *Thought and affliction,]* *Thought* here, as in many other places, signifies melancholy. MALONE.

P. 105, l. 11. — *of all christian souls!]* This is the common conclusion to many of the ancient monumental inscriptions. See Weever's *Funeral Monuments*, p. 657, 658. Berthelette, the publisher of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, 1554, speaking

first of the funeral of Chaucer, and then of Gower; says: "—— he lieth buried in the monasterie of Seynt Peter's at Westminster, &c. *On whose soules and all christen, Jesu have mercie.*" STEEVENS.

P. 105, l. 14. — *I must commune with your grief,*] The folio reads—*common.* To *common* is to *commune*. This word, pronounced as anciently spelt, is still in frequent provincial use. STEEVENS.

P. 105, l. 27. *No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,*] It was the custom, in the times of our author, to hang a sword over the grave of a knight.

JOHNSON.

This practice is uniformly kept up to this day. Not only the sword, but the helmet, gauntlet, spurs, and tabard (i. e. a coat whereon the armorial ensigns were anciently depicted, whence the term *coat of armour*) are hung over the grave of every knight. SIR J. HAWKINS.

P. 106, last l. — *yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter.*] The *bore* is the caliber of a gun, or the capacity of the barrel. *The matter* (says Hamlet) *would carry heavier words.* JOHNSON.

P. 108, l. 2. — *the general gender* —] The *common race* of the people. JOHNSON.

P. 108, l. 4. — *like the spring that turneth wood to stone,*] This simile is neither very seasonable in the deep interest of this conversation, nor very accurately applied. If the *spring* had changed base metals to gold, the thought had been more proper.

JOHNSON.

The allusion here is to the qualities still ascribed to the dropping well at Knaresborough in Yorkshire.

Camden (edit. 1590, p. 564,) thus mentions it: "Sub quo fons est in quem ex impendentibus rupibus aquae guttatim distillant, unde DROPPING WELL vocant, in quem *quicquid ligni immittitur, lapideo cortice brevi obduci et lapidescere observatum est.*" REED.

P. 108, l. 5-8. — *so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads — for so *loued arm'd*. If these words have any meaning, it should seem to be — The instruments of offence I employ, would have proved too weak to injure one who is so *loved and arm'd* by the affection of the people. Their love, like *armour*, would revert the arrow to the bow. STEEVENS.

Loued arm'd is as extraordinary a corruption as any that is found in these plays. MALONE.

P. 108, l. 11. — *if praises may go back again,*] If I may praise what has been, but is now to be found no more. JOHNSON.

P. 108, l. 17. *That we can let our beard be
shook with danger,*]

It is wonderful that none of the advocates for the learning of Shakspeare have told us that this line is imitated from Persius, Sat. ii:

"Idcirco stolidam praebet tibi vellere
barbam

"Jupiter?" STEEVENS.

P. 109, l. 23. *As checking at his voyage,*] The phrase is from falconry; and may be justified from the following passage in Hinde's *Eliosto Libidinoso*, 1606: "——For who knows not, quoth she, that this hawk, which comes now so

fair to the fist, may to-morrow *check* at the lure?"

STEEVENS.

P. 110, l. 3. *Of the unworthiest siege.*] Of the lowest rank. *Siege*, for seat, place.

JOHNSON.

P. 110, l. 9. *Importing health and graveness.*] *Importing* here may be, not *inferring* by logical consequence, but *producing* by physical effect. A young man regards show in his dress, an old man, *health*. JOHNSON.

Importing health, I apprehend, means, *denoting an attention to health*. MALONE.

Importing may only signify — *implying*, *denoting*.

Mr. Malone's explanation, however, may be the true one. STEEVENS.

P. 110, l. 18. 19. — *I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,*

Come short of what he did.] I could not contrive so many proofs of dexterity as he could perform. JOHNSON.

P. 110, l. 29. *For art and exercise in your defence,*] That is, in the science of defence. JOHNSON.

P. 110, l. 32. & fol. — *the scrimers*] The fencers. JOHNSON.

From *escrimeur*, Fr. a fencer. MALONE.

This unfavourable description of the French swordsmen is not in the folio. STEEVENS.

P. 111, l. 11. — *love is begun by time;*] This is obscure. The meaning may be, *love* is not innate in us, and co-essential to our nature, but begins at a certain time from some external cause, and being always subject to the operations of time, suffers change and diminution. JOHNSON.

The King reasons thus: — "I do not suspect

that you did not love your father; but I know that time abates the force of affection." I therefore suspect that we ought to read:

—— *love is begone by time;*

I suppose that Shakspeare places the syllable *be* before *gone*, as we say *be-paint*, *be-spatter*, *be-think*, &c. M. MASON.

P. 111, l. 12. — in passages of proof,] In transactions of daily experience. JOHNSON.

P. 111, l. 17. — growing to a *plurisy*,] I would believe, for the honour of Shakspeare, that he wrote *plethory*. But I observe the dramatick writers of that time frequently call a fullness of blood a *plurisy*, as if it came, not from *πλευρά*, but from *plus*, *pluris*. WARBURTON.

I think the word should be spelt — *plurisy*. This passage is fully explained by one in Mascall's treatise on cattle, 1662, p. 187: "Against the blood, or *plurisie* of blood. The disease of blood is, some young horses will feed, and being fat will *increase* blood, and so *grow to a plurisie*, and *die* thereof if he have not soon help."

TOLLET.

We should certainly read *plurisy*, as Tollet observes. M. MASON.

Dr. Warburton is right. The word is spelt *plurisy* in the quarto, 1604, and is used in the same sense as here, in *'Tis Pity she's a Whore*, by Ford, 1633. MALONE.

Mr. Pope introduced this simile in the *Essay on Criticism*, v. 303:

"For works may have more wit than
does them good,

"As bodies perish through excess of
blood."

Ascham has a thought very similar to Pope's:
"Twenty

“Twenty to one, offend more, in writing to much, then to litle: *euen as twenty, fall into sicknesse, rather by ouer much fulnes then by any lacke or emptinesse.*” *The Schole-Master*, 4to. bl. l. fol. 43. HOLT WHITE.

P. 111, l. 23. And then this *should* is like a *spendthrift sigh*,

That hurts by easing.] A *spendthrift sigh* is a *sigh* that makes an unnecessary waste of the vital flame. It is a notion very prevalent, that *sighs* impair the strength, and wear out the animal powers.

JOHNSON.

So, in the *Governall of Helthe*, &c. printed by Wynkyn de Worde: “And for why whan a man casteth out that noble humour too moche, he is hugely dyscolored, and his body moche febled, more then he lete four *sythes*, soo moche blode oute of his body.” STEEVENS.

Hence they are called, in *King Henry VI.*—blood-consuming *sighs*. Again, in *Pericles*, 1609:

“Do not consume your blood with sorrowing.”

The idea is enlarged upon in Fenton’s *Tragical Discourses*, 1579: “Why staye you not in tyme the source of your scorching *sighes*, that have already drayned your body of his wholesome humoures, appoynted by nature to gyve sucke to the entrals and inward parts of you?”

The original quarto, as well as the folio, reads—a *spendthrift’s sigh*; but I have no doubt that it was a corruption, arising from the first letter of the following word *sigh*, being an *s*. I have therefore, with the other modern editors, printed—*spendthrift sigh*, following a late quarto, (which however is of no authority,) printed in 1611. That a *sigh*, if it consumes the blood, *hurts us by*

easing, or is prejudicial to us on the whole, though it affords a temporary relief, is sufficiently clear: but the former part of the line, *and then this should*, may require a little explanation. I suppose the King means to say, that if we do not promptly execute what we are convinced we *should* or ought to do, we shall afterwards in vain repent our not having seized the fortunate moment for action: and this opportunity which we have let go by us, and the reflection that we *should* have done that, which, from supervening accidents, it is no longer in our power to do, is as prejudicial and painful to us as a blood-consuming sigh, that at once hurts and eases us.

I apprehend the poet meant to compare such a conduct, and the consequent reflection, *only* to the *pernicious* quality which he supposed to be annexed to sighing, and not to the temporary ease which it affords. His similes, as I have frequently had occasion to observe, seldom run on four feet. MALONE.

P. 112, l. 3. — being *remiss*,] He being not vigilant or cautious. JOHNSON.

P. 112, l. 7. A sword *unbated*,] i. e. not blunted as foils are. Or, as one edition has it, *embait-ed* or *envenomed*. POPE.

There is no such reading as *embaited* in any edition. In Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch, it is said of one of the *Metelli*, that "he shewed the people the cruel fight of fencers, at *unrebated* swords." STEEVENS.

Not blunted, as foils are by a button fixed to the end. MALONE.

P. 112, l. 7. — in a *pass of practice*,] Practice is often by Shakspeare, and other writers, taken for an *insidious stratagem*, or *privy treason*, a sense not incongruous to this passage, where

yet I rather believe, that nothing more is meant than a *thrust for exercise*. JOHNSON.

A *pass of practice* is a *favourite pass*, one that Laertes was well practised in. The treachery on this occasion, was his using a sword *unbated* and *envenomed*. M. MASON.

P. 112, l. 16-18. — *I'll touch my point
With this contagion; that, if I gall him
slightly,*

It may be death.] It is a matter of surprise, that no one of Shakspeare's numerous and able commentators has remarked, with proper warmth and detestation, the villainous assassin-like treachery of Laertes in this horrid plot. There is the more occasion that he should be here pointed out an object of abhorrence, as he is a character we are, in some preceding parts of the play, led to respect and admire. RITSON.

P. 112, l. 21. *May fit us to our shape:*] *May enable us to assume proper characters*, and to act our part. JOHNSON.

P. 112, l. 26. *If this should blast in proof,*] This, I believe, is a metaphor taken from a mine, which, in the proof or execution, sometimes breaks out with an ineffectual *blast*. JOHNSON.

The word *proof* shows the metaphor to be taken from the trying or proving fire-arms or cannon, which often *blast* or *burst* in the *proof*.

STEEVENS.

P. 112, l. 32. — *I'll have preferr'd him*] i. e. presented to him. Thus the quarto, 1604. The word indeed is mis-spelt, *prefard*. The folio reads — *I'll have prepar'd him*. MALONE.

To *prefer* (as Mr. Malone observes) certainly means — to *present*, or *offer*. STEEVENS.

P. 112, last but one l. — *your venom'd stuck,*]

For *stuck*, read *tuck*, a common name for a rapier. BLACKSTONE.

Your venom'd *stuck* is, your venom'd thrust. *Stuck* was a term of the fencing-school. MALONE.

P. 113, l. 10. By *long purples* is meant a plant, the modern botanical name of which is *orchis morio mas*, anciently *testiculus morionis*. The grosser name by which it passes, is sufficiently known in many parts of England, and particularly in the county where Shakspeare lived. Thus far Mr. Warner. Mr. Collins adds, that in Sussex it is still called *dead men's hands*; and that in Lyte's *Herbal*, 1578, its various names, too gross for repetition, are preserved.

Dead men's thumbs are mentioned in an ancient bl. l. ballad, entitled *The deceased Maiden Lover*. STEEVENS.

One of the grosser names of this plant Gertrude had a particular reason to avoid: — *the rampant widow*. MALONE.

P. 113, l. 12. — *liberal* —] *Licentious*. REED.

Liberal is free-spoken, licentious in language. So, in *Othello*: "Is he not a most profane and *liberal* counsellor?" MALONE.

P. 113, l. 20. *Which time, she chanted
snatches of old tunes;*

Fletcher, in his *Scornful Lady*, very invidiously ridicules this incident:

"I will run mad first, and if that get not pity,
"I'll drown myself to a most dismal ditty."

WARBURTON.

P. 113, l. 22. 23. — *like a creature native
and indu'd*

Unto that element:] I do not think the word *indued* is sense in this place; and believe we should read *inured*.

Shakspeare seems to have forgot himself in this scene, as there is not a single circumstance in the relation of Ophelia's death, that induces us to think she had drowned herself intentionally.

M. MASON.

As we are indued with certain original dispositions and propensities at our birth, Shakspeare here uses *indued* with great licentiousness, for formed by nature; clothed, endowed, or furnished, with properties suited to the element of water.

Our old writers used *indued* and *endowed* indiscriminately. MALONE.

P. 113, l. 25. 26. *Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay*

To muddy death.] In the first scene of the next act we find Ophelia buried with such rites as betoken she *foredid her own life*. It should be remembered, that the account here given, is that of a friend; and that the Queen could not possibly know what passed in the mind of Ophelia, when she placed herself in so perilous a situation. After the facts had been weighed and considered, the priest in the next act pronounces, that *her death was doubtful*. MALONE.

P. 114, l. 11. 12. — *make her grave straight:*] Make her grave from east to west in a direct line parallel to the church; not from north to south, athwart the regular line. This, I think, is meant.

JOHNSON.

I cannot think that this means any more than *make her grave immediately*. She is to be buried in *christian burial*, and consequently the grave is to be made as usual. STEEVENS.

P. 114, l. 19. 20. — *an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform:*]

Ridicule on scholastick divisions without distinction; and of distinctions without difference.

WARBURTON.

P. 114, last l. — *crowner's-quest law.*] I strongly suspect that this is a ridicule on the case of Dame Hales, reported by Plowden in his commentaries, as determined in 3 Eliz.

It seems, her husband sir James Hales had drowned himself in a river; and the question was, whether by this act a forfeiture of a lease from the dean and chapter of Canterbury, which he was possessed of, did not accrue to the crown: an inquisition was found before the coroner, which found him *felo de se*. The legal and logical subtilties, arising in the course of the argument of this case, gave a very fair opportunity for a sneer at *crowner's-quest-law*. The expression, a little before, that *an act hath three branches, &c.* is so pointed an allusion to the case I mention, that I cannot doubt but that Shakspeare was acquainted with, and meant to laugh at it.

It may be added, that on this occasion a great deal of subtilty was used, to ascertain whether sir James was the *agent* or the *patient*; or, in other words, whether *he went to the water, or the water came to him*. The cause of sir James's madness was the circumstance of his having been the judge who condemned *lady Jane Grey*.

SIR J. HAWKINS.

If Shakspeare meant to allude to the case of Dame Hales, (which indeed seems not improbable,) he must have heard of that case in conversation; for it was determined before he was born, and Plowden's Commentaries, in which it is reported, were not translated into English till a few years

ago. Our author's study was probably not much encumbered with old French Reports. MALONE.

P. 115, l. 7. — more than their *even christian*.] So, all the old books, and rightly. An old English expression for fellow-christian. THIRLBY.

P. 115, l. 17. — *confess thyself* —] *And be hang'd*, the Clown, I suppose, would have said, if he had not been interrupted. This was a common proverbial sentence. See *Othello*, Act IV. sc. i. — He might, however, have intended to say, *confess thyself an ass*. MALONE.

P. 115, l. 29. 30. *Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?*] The inquisitive reader may meet with an assemblage of such queries (which perhaps composed the chief festivity of our ancestors by an evening fire) in a volume of very scarce tracts, preserved in the University Library at Cambridge, D. 5. 2. The innocence of these *Demaundes Joyous* may deserve a praise which is not always due to their delicacy.

STEEVENS.

P. 115, l. 31. and *unyoke*.] If it be not sufficient to say, with Dr. Warburton, that this phrase might be taken from husbandry, without much depth of reading, we may produce it from a dittie of the workmen of Dover, preserved in the additions to Holinshead, p. 1546:

"My bow is broke, I would *unyoke*,

"My foot is sore, I can worke no more."

FARMER.

P. 116, l. 9. & fol. The three stanzas, sung here by the grave-digger, are extracted, with a slight variation, from a little poem, called *The aged Lover renounceth Love*, written by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, who flourished in the reign of King Henry VIII. and who was beheaded

1547, on a strained accusation or treason.

THEOBALD.

P. 116, l. 11. 12. *To contract, O, the time,
for, ah, my behove*

O, methought, there was nothing meet.]

This passage, as it stands, is absolute nonsense; but if we read "*for aye*," instead of "*for ah*" it will have some kind of sense, as it may mean "that it was not meet, though he was in love, to contract himself *for ever*." M. MASON.

Dr. Percy is of opinion that the different corruptions in these stanzas, might have been "designed by the poet himself, the better to paint the character of an illiterate clown."

Behove is interest, convenience. STEEVENS.

— *nothing meet.*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads:

O me thought there a was nothing a meet.

MALONE.

The original poem from which this stanza is taken, like the other succeeding ones, is preserved among lord Surrey's poems; though, as Dr. Percy has observed, it is attributed to lord Vaux by George Gascoigne.

All these difficulties however (says the Rev. Thomas Warton, *History of English Poetry*, Vol. III. p. 45,) are at once adjusted by MS. Harl. 1703, 25, in the British Museum, in which we have a copy of Vaux's poem, beginning, *I lothe that I did love*, with the title "A dyttie or sonet made by the lord Vaus, in the time of the noble Quene Marye, representing the image of death."

The entire song is published by Dr. Percy, in the first volume of *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. STEEVENS.

P. 116, l. 27. 28. This might be the pate of a

politician, which this ass now *o'er-reaches*;] The folio reads — *o'er-offices*. STEEVENS.

In the quarto, [1604] for *over-offices* is *over-reaches*, which agrees better with the sentence: it is a strong exaggeration to remark, that an ass can *over-reach* him who would once have tried to *circumvent* —. I believe both these words were Shakspeare's. An author in revising his work, when his original ideas have faded from his mind, and new observations have produced new sentiments, easily introduces images which have been more newly impressed upon him, without observing their want of congruity to the general texture of his original design. JOHNSON.

P. 117, l. 4. — *e'en so: and now my lady Worm's*;] The scull that was *my lord Such-a-one's*, is now *my lady Worm's*. JOHNSON.

P. 117, l. 8. — to play at *loggats*] This is a game played in several parts of England even at this time. A stake is fixed into the ground; those who play, throw *loggats* at it, and he that is nearest the stake, wins; I have seen it played in different counties at their sheep-sheering feasts, where the winner was entitled to a black fleece, which he afterwards presented to the farmer's maid to spin for the purpose of making a petticoat, and on condition that she knelt down on the fleece to be kissed by all the rusticks present.

It is one of the unlawful games enumerated in the statute of 33 of Henry VIII. STEEVENS.

Loggeting in the fields is mentioned for the first time among other "*new and crafty games and plays*," in the statute of 33 Henry VIII. c. 9. Not being mentioned in former acts against unlawful games, it was probably not practised long

before the statute of Henry the Eighth was made.

MALONE.

A *loggat*-ground, like a skittle-ground, is strewed with ashes, but is more extensive. A bowl much larger than the jack of the game of bowls is thrown first. The pins, which I believe are called *loggats*, are much thinner, and lighter at one extremity than the other. The bowl being first thrown, the players take the pins up by the thinner and lighter end, and fling them towards the bowl, and in such a manner that the pins may once turn round in the air, and slide with the thinner extremity foremost towards the bowl. The pins are about one or two-and-twenty inches long. BLOUNT.

P. 117, l. 17. *Quillets* are nice and frivolous distinctions. The word is rendered by Coles in his Latin Dictionary, 1679, *res frivola*. MALONE.

P. 117, l. 19. — *the sconce*] i. e. the head.

STEEVENS.

P. 117, l. 21 - 23. *This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries:]* By a *statute* is here meant, not an act of parliament, but a species of security for money, affecting real property; whereby the lands of the debtor are conveyed to the creditor, till out of the rents and profits of them his debt may be satisfied. MALONE.

A recovery with *double voucher* is the one usually suffered, and is so denominated from *two* persons (the latter of whom is always the common cryer, or some such inferior person) being successively *vouched*, or called upon, to warrant the tenant's title. Both *fines* and *recoveries* are fictions of law, used to convert an estate tail into a fee simple. *Statutes* are (not acts of parliament,

but) *statutes-merchant* and *staple*, particular modes of *recognizance* or acknowledgement for securing *debts*, which thereby become a charge upon the party's land. *Statutes* and *recognizances* are constantly mentioned together in the covenants of a purchase deed. RITSON.

P. 118, first l. *They are sheep, and calves, which seek out assurance in that.*] A quibble is intended. Deeds, which are usually written on parchment, are called the common *assurances* of the kingdom. MALONE.

P. 118, l. 23. 24. — *we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us.*] The card is the paper on which the different points of the compass were described. *To do any thing by the card*, is, *to do it with nice observation.*

JOHNSON.

The *card* is a *sea-chart*, still so termed by mariners: and the word is afterwards used by Osrick in the same sense. Hamlet's meaning will therefore be, we must speak *directly forward in a straight line*, plainly to the point. RITSON.

We must speak with the same precision and accuracy as is observed in making the true distances of coasts, the heights, courses, &c. in a *sea-chart*, which in our poet's time was called a *card*. In 1589 was published in 4to. *A briefe Discourse of Mappes and Cardes, and of their Uses.* — The "shipman's *card*" in *Macbeth*, is the paper on which the different points of the compass are described. MALONE.

In every ancient *sea-chart* that I have seen, the compass, &c. was likewise introduced.

STEEVENS.

P. 118, l. 26. 27. — *the age is grown so pick-ed, that the toe of the peasant comes so near*

the heel of the courtier,] So smart, so sharp, says Sir T. Hanmer, very properly; but there was, I think, about that time, a *picked* shoe, that is, a *shoe with a long pointed toe*, in fashion, to which the allusion seems likewise to be made. *Every man now is smart; and every man now is a man of fashion.* JOHNSON.

This fashion of wearing shoes with long pointed toes was carried to such excess in England, that it was restrained at last by proclamation so long ago as the fifth year of Edward IV. when it was ordered, "that the beaks or pykes of shoes and boots should not pass two inches, upon pain of cursing by the clergy, and forfeiting twenty shillings, to be paid, one noble to the King, another to the cordwainers of London, and the third to the chamber of London; — and for other countries and towns the like order was taken. — Before this time, and since the year 1482, the pykes of shoes and boots were of such length, that they were fain to be tied up to the knee with chains of silver, and gilt, or at least silken laces." STEEVENS.

i. e. so spruce, so quaint, so affected.

There is, I think, no allusion to *picked* or pointed shoes, as has been supposed. *Picked* was a common word of Shakspeare's age, in the sense above given, and is found in Minsheu's Dictionary, 1617, with its original signification: "*Trimm'd or drest sprucely.*" It is here used metaphorically.

MALONE.

I should have concurred with Mr. Malone in giving a general sense to the epithet — *picked*, but for Hamlet's mention of the *toe* of the peasant, &c.

STEEVENS.

P. 118, last l. *It was that very day that young Hamlet was born:]* By this scene it ap-

pears that Hamlet was then thirty years old, and knew Yorick well, who had been dead twenty-two years. And yet in the beginning of the play he is spoken of as a *very young* man, one that designed to go back to school, i. e. to the university of Wittenberg. The poet in the fifth act had forgot what he wrote in the first. BLACKSTONE.

P. 120, l. 15. — my lady's *chamber*,] Thus the folio. The quartos read — my lady's *table*, meaning, I suppose, her *dressing-table*.

STEEVENS.

P. 120, l. 16. — to this *favour*] i. e. to this countenance or complexion. MALONE.

P. 121, l. 3. Imperious *Caesar*,] Thus the quarto, 1604. The editor of the folio substituted *imperial*, not knowing that *imperious* was used in the same sense. There are other instances in the folio of a familiar term being substituted in the room of a more ancient word. MALONE.

P. 121, l. 6. — winter's *flaw*!] Winter's *blast*.

JOHNSON.

A *flaw* meant a sudden gust of wind. So, in Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: "Groppo, a *flaw*, or berrie of wind." MALONE.

P. 121, l. 12. — *maimed rites*!] Imperfect obsequies. JOHNSON.

P. 121, l. 14. To *fordo* is to undo, to destroy:

STEEVENS.

P. 121, l. 14. — 'Twas of some *estate*:] Some person of high rank. JOHNSON.

P. 121, l. 21. 1. *Priest*.] This *Priest* in the old quarto is called *Doctor*. STEEVENS.

P. 121, l. 21-23. *Her obsequies have been*
as far enlarg'd

As we have warranty:] Is there any allusion here to the coroner's warrant, directed to the

minister and church-wardens of a parish, and permitting the body of a person, who comes to an untimely end, to receive christian burial?

WHALLEY.

P. 121, l. 27. *Shards*,] i. e. broken pots or tiles, called *pot-sherds*, *tile-sherds*. So, in *Job*, ii. 8: "And he took him a *potsherd*, (i. e. a piece of a broken pot,) to scarpe himself withal."

RITSON.

P. 121, l. 29. Yet here she is allow'd her virgin *crants*,] Evidently corrupted from *chants*, which is the true word. A *specific* rather than a *generic* term being here required to answer to *maiden strewments*.

WARBURTON.

For this unusual word the editor of the first folio substituted *rites*. By a more attentive examination and comparison of the quarto copies and the folio, Dr. Johnson, I have no doubt, would have been convinced that this and many other changes in the folio were not made by Shakspeare, as is suggested in the following note. MALONE.

I have been informed by an anonymous correspondent, that *crants* is the German word for *garlands*, and I suppose it was retained by us from the Saxons. To carry *garlands* before the bier of a maiden, and to hang them over her grave, is still the practice in rural parishes.

Crants therefore was the original word, which the author, discovering it to be provincial, and perhaps not understood, changed to a term more intelligible, but less proper. *Maiden rites* give no certain or definite image. He might have put *maiden wreaths*, or *maiden garlands*, but he perhaps bestowed no thought upon it; and neither

genius nor practice will always supply a hasty writer with the most proper diction. JOHNSON.

In Minsheu's Dictionary, see *Beades*, where *roosen krants* means *sertum rosarium*; and such is the name of a character in this play. TOLLET.

P. 121, l. 31. *Burial*, here signifies interment in consecrated ground. WARBURTON.

P. 122, first l. To sing a *requiem*,] A *requiem*, is a mass performed in Popish churches for the rest of the soul of a person deceased. The folio reads — sing *sage requiem*. STEEVENS.

P. 123, l. 20. *Woul't drink up Esil? eat a crocodile?*] *Esil* — This word has through all the editions been distinguished by Italick characters, as if it were the proper name of some river; and so, I dare say, all the editors have from time to time understood it to be. But then this must be some river in Denmark; and there is none there so called; nor is there any near it in name, that I know of but *Yssel*, from which the province of Overijssel derives its title in the German Flanders. Besides, Hamlet is not proposing any impossibilities to Laertes, as the drinking up a river would be: but he rather seems to mean, — Wilt thou resolve to do things the most shocking and distasteful to human nature; and, behold, I am as resolute. I am persuaded the poet wrote:

Wilt drink up Eisel? eat a crocodile?
i. e. Wilt thou swallow down large draughts of *vinegar*? The proposition, indeed, is not very grand: but the doing it might be as distasteful and unsavoury as eating the flesh of a *crocodile*. And now there is neither an impossibility, nor an antichlimax: and the lowness of the idea is in some

measure removed by the uncommon term.

TEEOBALD.

Sir T. Hamner has,
*Wilt drink up Nile? or eat a croco-
 dile?*

Hamlet certainly meant (for he says he will rant) to dare Laertes to attempt any thing, however difficult or unnatural; and might safely promise to follow the example his antagonist was to set, in draining the channel of a river, or trying his teeth on an animal whose scales are supposed to be impenetrable. Had Shakspeare meant to make Hamlet say — *Wilt thou drink vinegar?* he probably would not have used the term *drink up*; which means, *totally to exhaust*; neither is that challenge very magnificent, which only provokes an adversary to hazard a fit of the heart-burn or the colick.

The commentator's *Yssell* would serve Hamlet's turn or mine. This river is twice mentioned by Stowe, p. 735: "It standeth a good distance from the river *Issell*, but hath a sconce on *Issell* of incredible strength."

But in an old Latin account of Denmark and the neighbouring provinces, I find the names of several rivers little differing from *Esil*, or *Eisill*, in spelling or pronunciation. Such are the *Essa*, the *Oesil*, and some others. The word, like many more, may indeed be irrecoverably corrupted; but, I must add, that few authors later than Chaucer or Skelton make use of *eysel* for *vinegar*: nor has Shakspeare employed it in any other of his plays. The poet might have written the *Weisel*, a considerable river which falls into the Baltic ocean, and could not be unknown to any Prince of Denmark. STEEVENS.

The

The quarto, 1604, has *esil*. In the folio the word is spelt *esile*. *Eisil* or *eisel* is venegar. The word is used by Chaucer, and by Sir Thomas More.

Mr. Steevens supposes, that a river was meant, either the *Yssel*, or *Oesil*, or *Weisel*, a considerable river which falls into the Baltick ocean. The words, *drink up*, he considers as favourable to his notion. "Had Shakspeare, (he observes,) meant to make Hamlet say, *Wilt thou drink vinegar?* he probably would not have used the term *drink up*, which means, *totally to exhaust*. In *King Richard II.* Act II. sc. ii. (he adds) a thought in part the same occurs:

"—— the task he undertakes,
"Is numb'ring sands, and *drinking oceans*
dry."

But I must remark, in that passage evidently *impossibilities* are pointed out. Hamlet is only talking of difficult or painful exertions. Every man can weep, fight, fast, tear himself, drink a potion of vinegar, and eat *a piece* of a dissected crocodile, however disagreeable; for I have no doubt that the poet uses the words *eat a crocodile*, for *eat of a crocodile*. We yet use the same phraseology in familiar language.

On the phrase *drink up* no stress can be laid, for our poet has employed the same expression in his 114th Sonnet, without any idea of *entirely exhausting*, and merely as synonymous to *drink*.

In Shakspeare's time, as at present, to *drink up*, often meant no more than simply to drink. In like manner we sometimes say, "when you have *swallow'd down* this potion," though we mean no more than — "when you have swallow'd this *potion.*" MALONE.

Mr. Malone's strictures are undoubtedly acute, and though not, in my own opinion, decisive, may still be just. Yet as I cannot reconcile myself to the idea of a Prince's challenging a nobleman to drink what Mrs. Quickly has called "a mess of vinegar," I have neither changed our former text, nor withdrawn my original remarks on it, notwithstanding they are almost recapitulated in those of my opponent. — On the score of such redundancy, however, I both need and solicit the indulgence of the reader. STEEVENS.

P. 123, l. 31. 32. — *as patient as the female dove,*

When that her golden couplets are disclosed,] — To disclose was anciently used for to hatch. So, in *The Booke of Huntynge, Hawkyng, Fyshyng, &c.* bl. l. no date: "First they ben eges; and after they ben disclosed, haukes; and commonly goshaukes ben disclosed as sone as the choughes." To exclude is the technical term at present. During three days after the pigeon has hatched her couplets, (for she lays no more than two eggs,) she never quits her nest, except for a few moments in quest of a little food for herself; as all her young require in that early state, is to be kept warm, an office which she never entrusts to the male. STEEVENS.

The young nestlings of the pigeon, when first disclosed, are callow, only covered with a yellow down: and for that reason stand in need of being cherished by the warmth of the hen, to protect them from the chillness of the ambient air, for a considerable time after they are hatched.

HEATH.

P. 124, l. 19 - 21. Ham. *Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,*

That would not let me sleep;] *The Historie of Hamblet*, bl. let. furnished our author with the scheme of sending the Prince to England, and with most of the circumstances described in this scene:

[After the death of Polonius] “Fengon [the King in the present play] could not content himselfe, but still his mind gave him that the foole [Hamlet] would play him some trick of legerdemaine. And in that conceit, seeking to bee rid of him, determined to find the meanes to doe it by the aid of a stranger, making the King of England minister of his massacrous resolution; to whom he purposed to send him, and by letters desire him to put him to death.

“Now to beare him company, were assigned two of Fengon’s faithful ministers, bearing letters ingraved in wood, that contained Hamlet’s death, in such sort as he had advertised the King of England. But the subtil Danish prince, (being at sea,) whilst his companions slept, having read the letters, and knowing his uncle’s great treason, with the wicked and villainous mindes of the two courtiers that led him to him to the slaughter, raced out the letters that concerned his death, and instead thereof graved others, with commission to the King of England to hang his two companions; and not content to turn the death they had devised against him, upon their own neckes, wrote further, that King Fengon willed him to give his daughter to Hamblet in marriage.” *Hyst. of Hamblet*, signat. G 2.

From this narrative it appears that the faithful ministers of Fengon were not unacquainted with the import of the letters they bore. Shakspeare, who has followed the story pretty closely, probab-

ly meant to describe their representatives, Rosen-
crantz and Guildenstern, as equally guilty; as
confederating with the King to deprive Hamlet of
his life. So that his procuring their execution,
though certainly not absolutely necessary to his
own safety, does not appear to have been a wan-
ton and unprovoked cruelty, as Mr. Steevens has
supposed in his very ingenious observations on the
general character and conduct of the Prince through-
out this piece.

In the conclusion of his drama the poet has en-
tirely deviated from the fabulous history, which
in other places he has frequently followed.

After Hamlet's arrival in England, (for no sea-
fight is mentioned,) "the King, (says *The History*
of Hamlet) admiring the young Prince, — gave
him his daughter in marriage, according to the
counterfeit letters by him devised; and the next
day caused the two servants of Fengon to be exe-
cuted, to satisfy, as he thought, the King's desire."
Hist. of Hamb. Ibid.

Hamlet, however, returned to Denmark, without
marrying the King of England's daughter, who, it
should seem, had only been *betrotted* to him.
When he arrived in his native country, he made
the courtiers drunk, and having burnt them to
death, by setting fire to the banqueting-room
wherein they sat, he went into Fengon's chamber,
and killed him, "giving him (says the relater)
such a violent blowe upon the chine of the neck,
that he cut his head clean from the shoulders."
Ibid. signat. F 3.

He is afterwards said to have been crowned King
of Denmark. MALONE.

I apprehend that a critick and a juryman are
bound to form their opinions on what they see

and hear in the cause before them, and not to be influenced by extraneous particulars unsupported by legal evidence in open court. I persist in observing that from Shakspeare's drama no proofs of the guilt of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern can be collected. They may be convicted by the black letter history; but if the tragedy forbears to criminate, it has no right to sentence them. This is sufficient for the commentator's purpose. It is not his office to interpret the plays of Shakspeare according to the novels on which they are founded, novels which the poet sometimes followed, but as often materially deserted. Perhaps he never confined himself strictly to the plan of any one of his originals. His negligence of poetick justice is notorious; nor can we expect that he who was content to sacrifice the pious Ophelia, should have been more scrupulous about the worthless lives of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Therefore, I still assert, that, in the tragedy before us, their deaths appear both wanton and unprovoked; and the critick, like Bayes, must have recourse to somewhat *long before the beginning of this play*, to justify the conduct of its hero. STEEVENS.

P. 124, l. 21. 22. — — — I lay

Worse than the *mutines* in the *bilboes*.] *Mutines*, the French word for seditious or disobedient fellows in the army or fleet. *Bilboes*, the *ship's prison*. JOHNSON.

To *mutine* was formerly used for to *mutiny*.

MALONE.

The *bilboes* is a bar of iron with fetters annexed to it, by which mutinous or disorderly sailors were anciently linked together. The word is derived from *Bilboa*, a place in Spain where instruments of steel were fabricated in the utmost per-

fection. To understand Shakspeare's allusion completely, it should be known, that as these fetters connect the legs of the offenders very close together, their attempts to rest must be as fruitless as those of Hamlet, in whose mind *there was a kind of fighting that would not let him sleep*. Every motion of one must disturb his partner in confinement. The *bilboes* are still shown in the Tower of London, among the other spoils of the Spanish Armada. The following is the figure of them :



STEEVENS.

P. 124, l. 22 – last l. — — — — *Rashly,
And prais'd be rashness for it, — Let us
know,*

*Our indiscretion sometime serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall: and that
should teach us,*

*There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.*

Hor. *That is most certain.*

Ham. *Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Grop'd I to find out them:] Hamlet, de-*

livering an account of his escape, begins with saying — That he *rashly* — and then is carried into a reflection upon the weakness of human wisdom. I *rashly* — praised be rashness for it — *Let us not think these events casual, but let us know, that is, take notice and remember, that we sometimes succeed by indiscretion, when we fail by deep plots, and infer the perpetual superintendence and agency of the Divinity.* The observation is just, and will be allowed by every human being who shall reflect on the course of his own life. JOHNSON.

This passage, I think, should be thus distributed:

— — — — *Rashly*

(*And prais'd be rashness, for it lets us know,*

Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,

When our deep plots do fail; and should teach us,

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,

Rough-hew them how we will; —

Hor. *That is most certain.*)

Ham. *Up from my cabin, &c.*

So that *rashly* may be joined in construction with —
in the dark grop'd I to find out them.

TYRWHITT.

Dr. Farmer informs me, that the words — *that shapes our ends, rough-hew them, how we will* — are merely technical. A wool-man, butcher, and dealer in *skewers*, lately observed to him that his nephew, (an idle lad) could only assist him in making them; “— he could *rough-hew* them, but I was obliged to *shape their ends.*” Whoever

recollects the profession of Shakspeare's father, will admit that his son might be no stranger to such a term. I have frequently seen packages of wool pinn'd up with *skewers*. STEEVENS.

P. 125, l. 6. *Larded with many several sorts of reasons,*] I am afraid here is a very poor conceit, founded on an equivoque between *reasons* and *raisins*, which in Shakspeare's time were undoubtedly pronounced alike. *Sorts of rasins*, sugars, &c. is the common phraseology of shops. — We have the same quibble in another play. MALONE.

I suspect no quibble or conceit in these words of Hamlet. In one of Ophelia's songs a similar phrase has already occurred: "*Larded all with sweet flowers.*" To *lard* any thing with *raisins*, however, was a practice unknown to ancient cookery. STEEVENS.

P. 125, l. 8. With, ho! *such bugs and goblins in my life,* —] With *such causes of terror*, rising from my character and designs. JOHNSON.

A *bug* was no less a terrifick being than a goblin. We call it at present a *bugbear*. STEEVENS.

P. 125, l. 9. — — *no leisure bated,*] *Bated*, for *allowed*. To *abate*, signifies to *deduct*; this deduction, when applied to the person in whose favour it is made, is called an *allowance*. Hence he takes the liberty of using *bated* for *allowed*. WARBURTON.

No leisure bated — means, without any *abatement* or intermission of time. MALONE.

P. 125, l. 17-19. *Being thus benetted round with villanies,*

Or *I could make a prologue to my brains,*
They had begun the play;] Hamlet is tell-

ing how luckily every thing fell out; he groped out their commission in the dark without waking them; he found himself doomed to immediate destruction. Something was to be done for his preservation. An expedient occurred, not produced by the comparison of one method with another, or by a regular deduction of consequences, but before he *could make a prologue to his brains, they had begun the play*, — Before he could summon his faculties, and propose to himself what should be done, a complete scheme of action presented itself to him. His mind operated before he had excited it. This appears to me to be the meaning. JOHNSON.

Or in old English signified *before*. MALONE.

P. 125, l. 20 – 22. *Devis'd a new commission;
wrote it fair:*

*I once did hold it, as our statist do,
A baseness to write fair,]* A statist is a statesman. STEEVENS.

Most of the great men of Shakspeare's time, whose autographs have been preserved, wrote very bad hands; their secretaries very neat ones.

BLACKSTONE.

“I have in my time, (says Montaigne,) seene some, who by writing did earnestly get both their titles and living, to disavow their apprentissage, marre their pen, and affect the ignorance of so *vulgar a qualitie*.” Florio's translation, 1603, p. 125. RITSON.

P. 125, l. 24. *It did me yeoman's service.*] The meaning, I believe, is, *This yeomanly qualification was a most useful servant, or yeoman, to me; i. e. did me eminent service.* The ancient yeomen were famous for their military valour. “These were the good archers in times past,

(says Sir Thomas Smith,) and the stable troop of footmen that affraide all France." STEEVENS.

P. 125, l. 29. *As love between them like the palm might flourish;*]

This comparison is scriptural. "The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree." "Psalm xcii. 11.

STEEVENS.

P. 125, l. 31. *And stand a comma 'tween their amities;*]

The expression of our author is, like many of his phrases, sufficiently constrained and affected, but it is not incapable of explanation. The *comma* is the note of *connection* and continuity of sentences; the *period* is the note of *abruption* and disjunction. Shakspeare had it perhaps in his mind to write, — That unless England complied with the mandate, *war should put a period to their amity*; he altered his mode of diction, and thought that, in an opposite sense, he might put, that *peace should stand a comma between their amities*. This is not an easy stile; but is it not the stile of Shakspeare? JOHNSON.

P. 125, l. 32. *And many such like as's of great charge,*] *Asses heavily loaded.* A quibble is intended between *as* the conditional particle, and *ass* the beast of burthen. That *charg'd* anciently signified *loaded*, may be proved from the following passage in *The Widow's Tears*, by Chapman, 1612:

"Thou must be the *ass charg'd with crowns* to make way."

JOHNSON.

Shakspeare has so many quibbles of his own to answer for, that there are those who think it hard he should be charged with others which perhaps he never thought of. STEEVENS.

Though the first and obvious meaning of these words certainly is, "*many similar adjurations, or monitory injunctions, of great weight and importance,*" yet Dr. Johnson's notion of a quibble being also in the poet's thoughts, is supported by two other passages of Shakspeare, in which *asses* are introduced as usually employed in the carriage of gold, a *charge* of no small weight:

"He shall but bear them, as the *ass*
bears gold,

"To groan and sweat under the busi-
ness."

Julius Caesar.

In further support of his observation, it should be remembered, that the letter *s* in the particle *as* in the midland counties is usually pronounced hard, as in the pronoun *us*. Dr. Johnson himself asways pronounced the particle *as* hard, and so I have no doubt did Shakspeare. It is so pronounced in Warwickshire at this day. The first folio accordingly has — *assis*. MALONE.

P. 125, last l. *Not shriving-time allow'd.*] i. e. without time for confession of their sins: another proof of Hamlet's christian-like disposition. STEEVENS.

P. 126, l. 3. 4. *I had my father's signet in
my purse,*

Which was the model of that Danish seal:]

The *model* is in old language the *copy*. The signet was formed in imitation of the Danish seal.

MALONE.

P. 126, l. 8. A *changeling* is a *child* which the fairies are supposed to leave in the room of that which they steal. JOHNSON.

P. 126, l. 14. 15. — — — — — *their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow:] In-*

sinuation, for corruptly obtruding themselves into his service. WARBURTON.

By their having insinuated or thrust themselves into the employment. MALONE.

P. 126, l. 20. — *think thee*,] i. e. bethink thee. MALONE.

P. 126, l. 25. An *angle* in Shakspeare's time signified a fishing-rod. MALONE.

P. 126, l. 27. *To quit him*] To requite him; to pay him his due. JOHNSON.

P. 127, l. 3. — *I'll count his favours*:] Thus the folio. Mr. Rowe first made the alteration, which is perhaps unnecessary. *I'll count his favours* may mean, — *I will make account of them*, i. e. *reckon upon them, value them*.

STEEVENS.

What favours has Hamlet received from Laertes, that he was to make account of? — I have no doubt but we should read,

—— *I'll court his favour*. M. MASON.

Mr. Rowe for *count* very plausibly reads *court*. MALONE.

Hamlet may refer to former civilities of Laertes, and weigh them against his late intemperance of behaviour; or may *count* on such kindness as he expected to receive in consequence of a meditated reconciliation. STEEVENS.

P. 127, l. 11. A *water-fly* skips up and down upon the surface of the water, without any apparent purpose of reason, and is thence the proper emblem of a busy trifler. JOHNSON.

Water-fly is in *Troilus and Cressida* used as a term of reproach, for *contemptible from smallness of size*. "How (says Thersites) the poor world is pestered with such *water-flies*: *diminutives of nature*." *Water-flies* are gnats. This

insect in Chaucer denotes a thing of no value. *Canterbury Tales*, v. 17203, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edition:

"Not worth to thee as in comparison
"The mountance [*value*] of a gnat."

HOLT WHITE.

P. 127, l. 16. — a *chough*;] A kind of jack-daw. JOHNSON.

P. 127, l. 28. Ham. *But yet, methinks, it is very sultry and hot; &c.*] Hamlet is here playing over the same farce with Osrick, which he had formerly done with Polonius. STEEVENS.

P. 128, first l. — *remember* —] "*Remember not your courtesy*," I believe, Hamlet would have said, if he had not been interrupted. "*Remember thy courtesy*," he could not possibly have said.

MALONE.

P. 128, l. 3. — *for my ease, in good faith.*] This seems to have been the affected phrase of the time. Thus, in Marston's *Malcontent*, 1604: "I beseech you, Sir, be covered. — No, in good faith *for my ease*." And in other places. FARMER.

It appears to have been the common language of ceremony in our author's time. "Why do you stand *bareheaded*? (says one of the speakers in Florio's *SECOND FRUTES*, 1591.) you do yourself wrong. Pardon me, good Sir, (replies his friend;) I do it *for my ease*." MALONE.

P. 128, l. 5. 6. — *full of most excellent differences,*] Full of *distinguishing* excellencies, JOHNSON.

P. 128, l. 8. — *he is the card or calendar of gentry,*] The general preceptor of elegance; the *card* by which a gentleman is to direct his course; the *calendar* by which he is to choose his time, that what he does may be both excellent and seasonable. JOHNSON.

P. 128, l. 8-10. — *you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.* *You shall find him containing and comprising every quality which a gentleman would desire to contemplate for imitation.* I know not but it should be read, *You shall find him the continent.* JOHNSON.

P. 128, l. 11-15. — *his definement suffers no perdition in you; — though, I know, to divide him inventorially, would dizzy the arithmetick of memory; and yet but raw neither, in respect of his quick sail.* This is designed as a specimen, and ridicule of the court-jargon amongst the *precieux* of that time. The sense in English is, “Sir, he suffers nothing in your account of him, though to enumerate his good qualities particularly would be endless; yet when we had done our best, it would still come short of him. However, in strictness of truth, he is a great genius, and of a character so rarely to be met with, that to find any thing like him we must look into his mirror, and his imitators will appear no more than his shadows.” WARBURTON.

Instead of *raw* we should read — *slow.*

WARBURTON.

I believe *raw* to be the right word; it is a word of great latitude; *raw* signifies *unripe, immature, thence unformed, imperfect, unskilful.* The best account of him would be *imperfect*, in respect of his quick sail. The phrase *quick sail* was, I suppose, a proverbial term for *activity of mind.*

JOHNSON.

P. 128, l. 16. — *a soul of great article:* This is obscure. I once thought it might have been, *a soul of great altitude*; but, I suppose, *a soul of great article*, means *a soul of large comprehen-*

sion, of many contents; the particulars of an inventory are called *articles*. JOHNSON.

P. 128, l. 16. 17. — *and his infusion of such dearth* —] *Dearth* is dearness, value, price. And his internal qualities of such value and rarity.

JOHNSON.

P. 128, l. 25. 26. *Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, Sir, really.*] Of this interrogaty remark the sense is very obscure. The question may mean, *Might not all this be understood in plainer language?* But then, *you will do it, Sir, really*, seems to have no use, for who could doubt but plain language would be intelligible? I would therefore read, *Is't possible not to be understood in a mother tongue? You will do it, Sir, really.*

JOHNSON.

Suppose we were to point the passage thus: "Is't not possible to understand? In another tongue you will do it, Sir, really."

The speech seems to be addressed to *Osrick*, who is puzzled by Hamlet's imitation of his own affected language. STEEVENS.

Theobald has silently substituted *rarely* for *really*. I think Horatio's speech is addressed to Hamlet. *Another tongue* does not mean as I conceive, *plainer language*, (as Dr. Johnson supposed,) but "language so fantastical and affected as to have the appearance of a *foreign tongue*:" and in the following words Horatio, I think, means to praise Hamlet for imitating this kind of babble so happily. I suspect, however, that the poet wrote — *Is't possible not to understand in a mother tongue?*

Since this note was written, I have found the very same error in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*,

4to. 1605. B. II. p. 60: — the art of grammar, whereof the use in *another* tongue is small, in a foreine tongue more." The author in his table of Errata says, it should have been printed — in *mother* tongue. MALONE.

P. 128, last but one l. — *if you did, it would not much approve me;]* If you knew I was not ignorant, your esteem would not much advance my reputation. To *approve*, is to *recommmend* to *approbation*. JOHNSON.

P. 129, l. 3-5. *I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.]* I dare not pretend to know him, lest I should pretend to an equality: no man can completely know another, but by knowing himself, which is the utmost extent of human wisdom. JOHNSON.

P. 129, l. 7. — *in his meed —]* In his excellence. JOHNSON.

P. 129, l. 14. — against the which he has *impawn'd,*] — Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads — *impon'd*. *Pignare* in Italian signifies both to *pawn*, and to lay a wager. MALONE.

Perhaps it should be, *depon'd*. So, *Hudibras*:

"I would upon this cause *depone*,

"As much as any I have known."

But perhaps *imponed* is pledged, *impawned*, so spelt to ridicule the affectation of uttering English words with French pronunciation. JOHNSON.

To *imponere* is certainly right, and means to put down, to stake, from the verb *impono*.

P. 129, l. 15. — *hangers,*] Under this term were comprehended four graduated straps, &c. that hung down in a belt on each side of its receptacle for the sword. I write this, with a most gorgeous belt, at least as ancient as the time of James I.

before

before me. It is of crimson velvet embroidered with gold, and had belonged to the Somerset family. STEEVENS.

The word *hangers* has been misunderstood. That part of the girdle or belt by which the sword was suspended, was in our poet's time called *the hangers*. See Minshew's Dictionary, 1617: "The *hangers* of a sword. G. Pendants d'espée, L. Subcingulum," &c. So, in an inventory found among the papers of Hamlet Clarke, an attorney of a court of record in London in the year 1611, and printed in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. LVIII. p. 111:

"Item, One payre of girdle and *hangers*, of silver purle, and cullored silke.

"Item, One payre of girdler and *hangers*, upon white sattene."

The *hangers* ran in an oblique direction from the middle of the forepart of the girdle across the left thigh, and were attached to the girdle behind. MALONE.

P. 129, l. 20. — you must be edified by the *margent*,] Dr. Warburton very properly observes, that in the old books the gloss or comment was usually printed on the *margent* of the leaf.

STEEVENS.

P. 129, l. 23. — more *german* —] More *a-kin*. JOHNSON.

P. 129, l. 30-33. *The King, Sir, hath lay'd, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath laid, on twelve for nine;*] This wager I do not understand. In a dozen passes one must exceed the other more or less than three hits. Not can I comprehend, how, in a dozen, there can be twelve to nine. The passage is of no importance; it is

sufficient that there was a wager. The quarto has the passage as it stands. The folio, — *He hath one twelve for mine.* JOHNSON.

As three or four complete pages would scarcely hold the remarks already printed, together with those which have lately been communicated to me in MSS. on this very unimportant passage, I shall avoid both partiality and tediousness, by the omission of them all — I therefore leave the conditions of this wager to be adjusted by the members of Brookes's, or the Jockey-Club at Newmarket, who on such subjects may prove the most enlightened commentators, and most successfully bestir themselves in the cold unpoetick dabble of calculation.

STEEVENS.

P. 130, l. 17. 18. *This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.*] I see no particular propriety in the image of the lapwing. Osrick did not run till he had done his business. We may read, — *This lapwing ran away* — That is, *this fellow was full of unimportant bustle from his birth.* JOHNSON.

I believe, Hamlet means to say that Osrick is, bustling and impetuous, and yet “but *raw* in respect of his quick sail.” MALONE.

P. 130, l. 19. *He did comply with his dug,*] For *comply* Dr. Warburton and the subsequent editors; read — *compliment*. The verb *to compliment* was not used, as I think, in the time of Shakspeare. MALONE.

I doubt whether any alteration be necessary. Shakspeare seems to have used *comply* in the sense in which we use the verb *compliment*. See before, Act II. sc. ii: “—let me *comply* with you in this garb.” TYRWHITT.

P. 130, l. 20. 21. — and many more of the

same *breed*,] The first folio has — *and mine more of the same beavy*. The second folio — *and nine more*, &c. Perhaps the last is the true reading.

STEEVENS.

There may be a propriety in *bevy*, as he has just called him a *lapwing*. TOLLET.

“Many more of the same breed,” is the reading of the quarto, 1604. MALONE.

P. 130, l. 22. 23. *Outward habit of encounter*,] is exterior politeness of address; in allusion to Osrick’s last speech. HENLEY.

P. 130, l. 20 – 25. *Thus has he* (and many more of the same breed, that, I know, the drossy age dotes on,) *only got the tune of the time, and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnow’d opinions:*] This passage in the quarto stands thus: — “They have got out of the habit of encounter, a kind of misty collection, which carries them through and through the most profane and renowned opinions.” If this printer preserved any traces of the original, our author wrote, “the most *sane* and *renowned* opinions,” which is better than *fann’d* and *winnow’d*.

The meaning is, “these men have got the cant of the day, a superficial readiness of slight and cursory conversation, a kind of frothy collection of fashionable prattle, which yet carries them through the most select and approving judgements. This airy facility of talk sometimes imposes upon wise men.”

Who has not seen this observation verified?

JOHNSON.

Fond is evidently opposed to *winnow’d*. *Fond*, in the language of Shakspeare’s age, signified *foolish*.

Winnowed is *sifted*, *examined*. The sense is then, that their conversation was yet successful enough to make them passable not only with the weak, but with those of sounder judgement. The same opposition in terms is visible in the reading which the quartos offer. *Profane* or *vulgar* is opposed to *trenowned*, or *thrice renowned*.

STEEVENS.

Fann'd and *winnow'd* seems right to me. Both word *winnowed*, *fand* and *drest*, occur together in Markham's *English Husbandman*, p. 117.

TOLLET.

On considering this passage, it always appeared to me that we ought to read, "the most *sound* and *winnowed* opinions:" and I have been confirmed in that conjecture by a passage I lately met with in *Howel's Letters*, where speaking of a man merely contemplative, he says, "Besides he may want judgement in the choice of his authors, and knows not how to turn his hand either in weighing or *winnowing the soundest opinions*," Book III. Letter viii. M. MASON.

P. 130, l. 25. 26. — *and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.*] These men of show, without solidity, are like bubbles raised from soap and water, which dance, and glitter, and please the eye, but if you extend them, by blowing hard, separate into a mist; so if you oblige these specious talkers to extend their compass of conversation, they at once discover the tenuity of their intellects. JOHNSON.

P. 131, l. 7. — *some gentle entertainment*] Mild and temperate conversation. JOHNSON.

P. 131, l. 13. — *I shall win at the odds.*] I shall succeed with the advantage that I am allowed. MALONE.

P. 131, l. 17. *Gain-giving*] is the same as *misgiving*. STEEVENS.

P. 131, l. 18. *If your mind dislike any thing, obey it:*] With these presages of future evils arising in the mind, the poet has fore-run many events which are to happen at the conclusions of his plays; and sometimes so particularly, that even the circumstances of calamity are minutely hinted at, as in the instance Juliet, who tells her lover from the window, that he appears *like one dead in the bottom of a tomb*. The supposition that the genius of the mind gave an alarm before approaching dissolution, is a very ancient one, and perhaps can never be totally driven out: yet it must be allowed the merit of adding beauty to poetry, however injurious it may sometimes prove to the weak and the superstitious. STEEVENS.

P. 131, l. 25. 26. — *since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.*] The old quarto reads, — *Since no man of ought he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.* This is the true reading. Here the premises conclude right, and the argument drawn out at length is to this effect: "It is true, that, by death, we lose all the goods of life; yet seeing this loss is no otherwise an evil than as we are sensible of it, and since death removes all sense of it, what matters it how soon we lose them? Therefore come what will, I am prepared." WARBURTON.

The reading of the quarto was right, but in some other copy the harshness of the transposition was softened, and the passage stood thus: — *Since no man knows aught of what he leaves.* For *knows* was printed in the later copies *has*, by a slight blunder in such typographers.

I do not think Dr. Warburton's interpretation of the passage the best that it will admit. The meaning may be this, — *Since no man knows aught of the state of life which he leaves, since he cannot judge what other years may produce, why should he be afraid of leaving life betimes? Why should he dread an early death, of which he cannot tell whether it is an exclusion of happiness, or an interception of calamity? I despise the superstition of augury and omens, which has no ground in reason or piety; my comfort is, that I cannot fall but by the direction of Providence.*

Sir T. Hanmer has, — *Since no man owes aught, a conjecture not very reprehensible. Since no man can call any possession certain, what is it to leave?* JOHNSON.

Dr. Warburton has truly stated the reading of the first quarto, 1604. The folio reads, — *Since no man has ought of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?*

In the late editions neither copy has been followed. MALONE.

P. 131, last l. Ham. *Give me your pardon,*
Sir: I have done you wrong:]

I wish Hamlet had made some other defence; it is unsuitable to the character of a good or a brave man, to shelter himself in falsehood. JOHNSON.

P. 132, l. 20. *I am satisfied in nature,]* This was a piece of satire on fantastical honour. Though *nature* is satisfied, yet he will ask advice of older men of the sword, whether *artificial honour* ought to be contended with Hamlet's submission.

STEEVENS.

P. 132, l. 23 - 26. — *and will no reconcilement,*

Till by some elder masters, of known honour,

*I have a voice and precedent of peace,
To keep my name ungor'd:]* This is said in allusion to an English custom. I learn from an ancient MS. of which the reader will find a more particular account in a note to *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, that in Queen Elizabeth's time there were "four ancient masters of defence," in the city of London. They appear to have been the referees in many affairs of honour, and exacted tribute from all inferior practitioners of the art of fencing, &c. STEEVENS.

Our poet frequently alludes to English customs, and may have done so here, but I do not believe that gentlemen ever submitted points of honour to persons who exhibited themselves for money as prize-fighters on the publick stage; though they might appeal in certain cases to Raleigh, Essex, or Southampton, who from their high rank, their course of life, and established reputation, might with strict propriety be styled, "elder masters, of known honour." MALONE.

P. 133, l. 7. *Your Grace hath laid the odds
o'the weaker side.]*

When the odds were on the side of Laertes, who was to hit Hamlet twelve times to nine, it was perhaps the author's slip. Sir T. Hanmer reads—

*Your Grace hath laid upon the weaker
side.* JOHNSON.

I see no reason for altering this passage. Hamlet considers the things *impon'd* by the King, as of more value than those *impon'd* by Laertes; and therefore says, "that he had laid odds on the weaker side." M. MASON.

Hamlet either means, that what the King had laid was more valuable than what Laertes staked; or that *the King hath made his bet, an advan-*

tage being given to the weaker party. I believe the first is the true interpretation. In the next line but one the word *odds* certainly means *an advantage given to the party*, but here it may have a different sense. This it not an uncommon practice with our poet. MALONE.

The King had wagered, on Hamlet, *six Barbary horses*, against a few *rapiers, poniards, &c.* that is, about *twenty to one*. These are the *odds* here meant. RITSON.

P. 133, l. 9. — we have therefore *odds*.] These *odds* were *twelve to nine* in favour of Hamlet, by Laertes giving him *three*. RITSON.

P. 133, l. 14. *Set me the stoups of wine upon that table:]* A *stoup* is a kind of *flaggon*. STEEVENS.

Containing somewhat more than two quarts. MALONE.

Stoup is a common word in Scotland at this day, and denotes a pewter vessel, resembling our wine measure; but of no determinate quantity *that* being ascertained by an adjunct, as, *gallon-stoup, pint-stoup, mutchkin-stoup, &c.* The vessel in which they fetch or keep water is also called the *water-stoup*. A *stoup of wine* is therefore equivalent to a pitcher of wine. RITSON.

P. 133, l. 20. *And in the cup an union shall he throw,]* In some editions,

And in the cup an onyx shall he throw. This is a various reading in several of the old copies; but *union* seems to me to be the true word. If I am not mistaken, neither the *onyx*, nor *sardonyx*, are jewels which ever found place in an imperial crown. An *union* is the finest sort of pearl, and has its place in all crowns,

and coronets. Besides, let us consider what the King says on Hamlet's giving Laertes the first hit:

"Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this
pearl is thine;

"Here's to thy health."

Therefore, if an *union* be a *pearl*, and an *onyx* a gem, or stone, quite differing in its nature from *pearls*: the King saying, that Hamlet has earn'd the *pearl*, I think, amounts to a demonstration that it was an *union* pearl, which he meant to throw into the cup. THEOBALD.

Thus the folio rightly. In the first quarto by the carelessness of the printer, for *union*, we have *unice*, which in the subsequent quarto copies was made *onyx*. An *union* is a very precious pearl.

MALONE.

To swallow a *pearl* in a draught seems to have been equally common to royal and mercantile prodigality. So, in the Second Part of *If you know not Me, you know Nobody*, 1606, Sir Thomas Gresham says:

"Here 16,000 pound at one clap goes.

"Instead of sugar, Gresham *drinks this
pearle*

"Unto his Queen and mistress."

It may be observed, however, that *pearls* were supposed to possess an exhilarating quality.

STEEVENS.

P. 134, first l. — *Hamlet, this pearl is thine ;]*

Under pretence of throwing a *pearl* into the cup, the King may be supposed to drop some poisonous drug into the wine. Hamlet seems to suspect this, when he afterwards discovers the effects of the poison, and tauntingly asks him, — "Is the union here?" STEEVENS.

P. 134, l. 9. *He's fat, and scant of breath.]*

It seems that *John Lowin*, who was the original *Falstaff*, was no less celebrated for his performance of *Henry VIII.* and *Hamlet*. See the *Historia Histrionica*, &c. If he was adapted, by the corpulence of his figure; to appear with propriety in the two former of these characters, Shakspeare might have put this observation into the mouth of her Majesty, to apologize for the want of such elegance of person as an audience might expect to meet with in the representative of the youthful Prince of Denmark, whom Ophelia speaks of as "the glass of fashion and the mould of form." This, however, is mere conjecture, as *Joseph Taylor* likewise acted *Hamlet* during the life of Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

The author of *Historia Histrionica*, and Downes the Prompter, concur in saying, that Taylor was the performer of Hamlet. Roberts the player alone has asserted, (apparently without any authority,) that this part was performed by Lowin. MALONE.

P. 134, l. 11. *The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.*] i. e. (in humbler language) drinks good luck to you. STEEVENS.

P. 134, l. 19. *Come, let me wipe thy face.*] These very words (the present repetition of which might have been spared) are addressed by Doll Tearsheet to Falstaff, when he was heated by his pursuit of Pistol. STEEVENS.

P. 134, l. 27. *I am afeard, you make a wanton of me.*] A wanton was a man feeble and effeminate. JOHNSON.

Rather, you trifle with me as if you were playing with a child. RITSON.

A passage in *King John* shows that *wanton*

here means *a man feeble and effeminate*, as Dr. Johnson has explained it. MALONE.

P. 135, l. 31. *Drink off this potion: — Is the union here?*] Thus the folio. In a former passage in the quarto, 1604, for *union* we had *unice*; here it has *onyx*.

It should seem from this line, and Laertes's next speech, that Hamlet here forces the expiring King to drink some of the poisoned cup, and that he dies while it is at his lips. MALONE.

P. 136, l. 6. *That are but mutes or audience to this act,*] That are either mere *auditors* of this *catastrophe*, or at most only *mute performers*, that fill the stage without any part in the action. JOHNSON.

P. 136, l. 7. A *sergeant* is a bailiff or sheriff's officer. RITSON.

P. 136, l. 32. *The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirits;*] Alluding, I suppose, to a victorious cock exulting over his conquered antagonist. STEEVENS.

This word, [*o'er-crows*] for which Mr. Pope and succeeding editors have substituted *over-grows*, is used by Holinshed in his *History of Ireland*: "These noblemen laboured with tooth and nayle to *over-crowe*, and consequently to overthrow, one another." MALONE.

The accepted reading is the more quaint, the rejected one, the more elegant of the two. STEEVENS.

P. 136, last l. — with the *occurrents*,] i. e. incidents. The word is now disused. STEEVENS.

P. 137, first l. *Which have solicited,*] *Solicited*, for brought on the event. WARBURTON.

Warburton says that *solicited*, means *brought on the event*; but that is a meaning the word

cannot import. That have *solicited*, means that have *excited*; — but the sentence is left imperfect. M. MASON.

What Hamlet would have said, the poet has not given us any ground for conjecturing. The words seem to mean no more than — *which have incited me to —*. MALONE.

P. 137, l. 4. *And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!*] The concluding words of the unfortunate Lord Essex's praying on the scaffold were these: "— and when my life and body shall part, send *thy blessed angels*, which may receive my soule, and convey it to the joys of heaven."

Hamlet had certainly been exhibited before the execution of that amiable nobleman; but the words here given to Horatio might have been one of the many additions made to this play. As no copy of an earlier date than 1604 has yet been discovered, whether Lord Essex's last words were in our author's thoughts, cannot now be ascertained.

MALONE.

Let us review for a moment the behaviour of Hamlet, on the strength of which Horatio founds his eulogy, and recommends him to the patronage of angels.

Hamlet, at the command of his father's ghost, undertakes with seeming alacrity to revenge the murder; and declares he will banish all other thoughts from his mind. He makes, however, but one effort to keep his word, and that is, when he mistakes Polonius for the King. On another occasion, he defers his purpose till he can find an opportunity of taking his uncle when he is least prepared for death, that he may insure damnation to his soul. Though he assassinated Polonius by

accident, yet he deliberately procures the execution of his school-fellows, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who appear not, from any circumstances in this play, to have been acquainted with the treacherous purposes of the mandate they were employed to carry. To embitter their fate, and hazard their punishment beyond the grave, he denies them even the few moments necessary for a brief confession of their sins. Their end (as he declares in a subsequent conversation with Horatio) gives him no concern, for they obtruded themselves into the service, and he thought he had a right to destroy them. From his brutal conduct toward Ophelia, he is not less accountable for her distraction and death. He interrupts the funeral designed in honour of this lady, at which both the King and Queen were present; and, by such an outrage to decency, renders it still more necessary for the usurper to lay a second stratagem for his life, though the first had proved abortive. He insults the brother of the dead, and boasts of an affection for his sister, which, before, he had denied to her face; and yet at this very time must be considered as desirous of supporting the character of a madman, so that the openness of his confession is not to be imputed to him as a virtue. He apologizes to Horatio afterwards for the absurdity of this behaviour, to which, he says, he was provoked by that nobleness of fraternal grief, which, indeed, he ought rather to have applauded than condemned. Dr. Johnson has observed, that to bring about a reconciliation with Laertes, he has availed himself of a dishonest fallacy; and to conclude, it is obvious to the most careless spectator or reader, that he kills the King at last to revenge himself, and not his father.

Hamlet cannot be said to have pursued his ends by very warrantable means; and if the poet, when he sacrificed him at last, meant to have enforced such a moral, it is not the worst that can be deduced from the play; for, as *Maximus*, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Valentinian*, says,

“Although his justice were as white as truth,

“His way was crooked to it; that condemns him.”

The late Dr. Akenside once observed to me, that the conduct of Hamlet was every way unnatural and indefensible, unless he were to be regarded as a young man whose intellects were in some degree impaired by his own misfortunes; by the death of his father, the loss of expected sovereignty, and a sense of shame resulting from the hasty and incestuous marriage of his mother.

I have dwelt the longer on this subject, because Hamlet seems to have been hitherto regarded as a hero not undeserving the pity of the audience; and because no writer on Shakspeare has taken the pains to point out the immoral tendency of his character. STEEVENS.

Mr. Ritson controverts the justice of Mr. Steevens's strictures on the character of Hamlet, which he undertakes to defend. The arguments he makes use of for this purpose are too long to be here inserted, and therefore I shall content myself with referring to them. See REMARKS, p. 217, to 224.

REED.

Some of the charges here brought against Hamlet appear to me questionable at least, if not unfounded. I have already observed that in the novel on which this play is constructed, the ministers who by the King's order accompanied

the young Prince to England, and carried with them a packet in which his death was concerted, were apprized of its contents; and therefore we may *presume* that Shakspeare meant to describe their representatives, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as equally criminal; as combining with the King to deprive Hamlet of his life. His procuring their execution therefore does not with certainty appear to have been an unprovoked cruelty, and *might* have been considered by him as necessary to his *future safety*; knowing, as he must have known, that they had devoted themselves to the service of the King in whatever he should command. The principle on which he acted, is ascertained by the following lines, from which also it may be inferred that the poet meant to represent Hamlet's school-fellows as privy to the plot against his life:

“There's letters seal'd: and my two
school-fellows —

“Whom I will trust as I will adders
fang'd,

“They bear the mandate; they must
sweep my way,

“And marshall me to knavery: Let it
work;

“For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer

“Hoist with his own petar; and it shall
go hard,

“But I will delve one yard below *their*
mines,

“*And blow them to the moon.*”

Another charge is, that “*he comes**) to disturb

* — *he comes* —] The words stood thus in edit. 1778, &c.
Steevens.

the funeral of Ophelia:" but the fact is otherwise represented in the first scene of the fifth act: for when the funeral procession appears, (which he does not seek, but finds,) he exclaims,

"The Queen, the courtiers: *who is this they follow,*

"And with such maimed rites?" nor does he know it to be the funeral of Ophelia, till Laertes mentions that the dead body was that of his sister.

I do not perceive that he is accountable for the madness of Ophelia. He did not mean to kill her father when concealed behind the arras, but the King; and still less did he intend to deprive her of her reason and her life: her subsequent distraction therefore can no otherwise be laid to his charge, than as an unforeseen consequence from his too ardently pursuing the object recommended to him by his father.

He appears to have been induced to leap into Ophelia's grave, not with a design to insult Laertes, but from his love to her, (which then he had no reason to conceal,) and from the *bravery of her brother's grief*, which excited him (not to condemn that brother, as has been stated, but) to *vie with him* in the expression of affection and sorrow:

"Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,

"Until my eyelids will no longer wag.—

"I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers

"Could not with all their quantity of love

"Make up my sum."

When Hamlet says, "the bravery of his grief did put me into a *towering passion*," I think, he

he means, into a lofty expression (not of *resentment*, but) of *sorrow*.

I may also add, that he neither assaulted, nor insulted Laertes, till that nobleman had cursed him, and seized him by the throat. MALONE.

P. 137, l. 11. *This quarry cries on havock!*]
Sir T. Hanmer reads,

———cries out, *havock!*

To *cry on*, was to *exclaim against*. I suppose, when unfair sportsmen destroyed more *quarry* or *game* than was reasonable, the censure was to cry, *Havock*. JOHNSON.

We have the same phraseology in *Othello*, Act V. sc. i:

“—Whose noise is this, that *cries on* murder?”

See the note there. MALONE.

P. 137, l. 11–13. ——O proud death!

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,] Shakspeare has already employed this allusion to the *Choae*, or *feasts of the dead*, which were anciently celebrated at Athens, and are mentioned by Plutarch in the life of *Antonius*. STEEVENS.

P. 137, l. 22. *Not from his mouth,*] i. e. the King's. STEEVENS.

P. 137, l. 31. *Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;*] *Carnal* is a word used by Shakspeare as an adjective to *carnage*. RITSON.

Of sanguinary and unnatural acts, to which the perpetrator was instigated by concupiscence, or, to use our poet's own words, by “*carnal* stings.” The speaker alludes to the murder of old Hamlet by his brother, previous to his incestuous union with Gertrude. A *Remarker* asks, “was the re-

lationship between the usurper and the deceased King a secret confined to Horatio?" — No, but the *murder* of Hamlet by Claudius was a secret which the young Prince had imparted to Horatio, and had imparted to him alone; and to this it is he principally, though covertly, alludes. — *Carnal* is the reading of the only authentick copies, the quarto 1604, and the folio 1623. The modern editors, following a quarto of no authority, for *carnal*, read *cruel*. MALONE.

The edition immediately preceding that of Mr. Malone, reads — *carnal*, and not *cruel*, as here asserted. REED.

P. 137, last but one l. — *put on* —] i. e. instigated, produced. MALONE.

P. 138, l. 6. — *some rights of memory in this kingdom,*] Some rights, which are remembered in this kingdom. MALONE.

P. 138. l. 9. 10. *And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more:]*

No is the reading of the old quartos, but certainly a mistaken one. We say, *a man will no more draw breath*: but that a man's *voice will draw no more*, is, I believe, an expression without any authority. I choose to espouse the reading of the elder folio:

And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more.

And this is the poet's meaning. Hamlet, just before his death, had said:

"But I do prophecy, the election lights

"On Fortinbras: he has my dying *voice*;

"So tell *him*," &c.

Accordingly, Horatio here delivers that message; and very justly infers, that Hamlet's *voice* will

be seconded by others, and procure them in favour of Fortinbras's succession. THEOBALD.

If the dramas of Shakspeare were to be characterised, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of Hamlet the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity; with merriment that includes judicious and instructive observations: and solemnity not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet caused much mirth, the mournful distraction of Ophelia fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that in the first act chills the blood with horror, to the fop in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is perhaps not wholly secure against objections. The action is indeed for the most part in continual progression, but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

Hamlet is, through the whole piece, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the King, he

makes no attempt to punish him; and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet had no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily be formed to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having shown little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained, but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification, which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious. JOHNSON.

The levity of behaviour which Hamlet assumes immediately after the disappearance of the ghost in the first act, [sc. v.] has been objected to; but the writer of some sensible Remarks on this tragedy, published in 1736, justly observes, that the poet's object there was, that Marcellus "might not imagine that the ghost had revealed to Hamlet some matter of great consequence to him, and that he might not therefore be suspected of any deep design."

"I have heard (adds the same writer,) many persons wonder, why the poet should bring in this ghost in complete armour. — I think these reasons may be given for it. We are to consider, that he could introduce him in these dresses only; in his regal dress, in a habit of interment, in a common habit, or in some fantastick one of his own invention. Now let us examine, which was

most likely to affect the spectators with passions proper on the occasion. —

“The regal habit has nothing uncommon in it, nor surprising, nor could it give rise to any fine images. The habit of interment was something too horrible; for terror, not horror, is to be raised in the spectators. The common habit (or *habit de ville*, as the French call it,) was by no means proper for the occasion. It remains then that the poet should choose some habit from his own brain: but this certainly could not be proper, because invention in such a case would be so much in danger of falling into the grotesque, that it was not to be hazarded.

“Now as to the armour, it was very suitable to a King who is described as a great warrior, and is very particular; and consequently affects the spectators without being fantastick. —

“The King spurs on his son to revenge his foul and unnatural murder, from these two considerations chiefly; that he was sent into the other world without having had time to repent of his sins, and without the necessary sacraments, according to the church of Rome, and that consequently his soul was to suffer, if not eternal damnation, at least a long course of penance in purgatory; which aggravates the circumstances of his brother's barbarity; and secondly, that Denmark might not be the scene of usurpation and incest, and the throne thus polluted and profaned. For these reasons he prompts the young Prince to revenge; else it would have been more becoming the character of such a Prince as Hamlet's father is represented to have been, and more suitable to his present condition, to have left his brother to the divine punishment, and to

a possibility of repentance for his base crime, which, by cutting him off, he must be deprived of.

“To conform to the ground-work of his plot, Shakspeare makes the young Prince feign himself mad. I cannot but think this to be injudicious; for so far from securing himself from any violence which he feared from the usurper, it seems to have been the most likely way of getting himself confined, and consequently debarred from an opportunity of revenging his father's death, which now seemed to be his only aim; and accordingly it was the occasion of his being sent away to England; which design, had it taken effect upon his life, he never could have revenged his father's murder. To speak truth, our poet by keeping too close to the ground-work of his plot, has fallen into an absurdity; for there appears no reason at all in nature, why the young Prince did not put the usurper to death as soon as possible, especially as Hamlet is represented as a youth so brave, and so careless of his own life.

“The case indeed is this. Had Hamlet gone naturally to work, as we could suppose such a Prince to do in parallel circumstances, there would have been an end of our play. The poet therefore was obliged to delay his hero's revenge: but then he should have contrived some good reason for it.

“His beginning his scenes of Hamlet's madness by his behaviour to Ophelia, was judicious, because by this means he might be thought to be mad for her, not that his brain was disturbed about state affairs, which would have been dangerous.

“It does not appear whether Ophelia's madness was chiefly for her father's death, or for the loss of Hamlet. It is not often that young women run mad for the loss of their fathers. It is more na-

tural to suppose that, like *Chimene*, in the *Cid*, her great sorrow proceeded from her father's being killed by the man she loved, and thereby making it indecent for her ever to marry him.

“Laertes's character is very odd one; it is not easy to say whether it is good or bad; but his consenting to the villainous contrivance of the usurper's to murder Hamlet, makes him much more a bad man than a good one. — It is a very nice conduct in the poet to make the usurper build his scheme upon the generous unsuspecting temper of the person he intends to murder, and thus to raise the Prince's character by the confession of his enemy; to make the villain ten times more odious from his own mouth. The contrivance of the foil unbated, (i. e. without a button,) is methinks too gross a deceit to go down even with a man of the most unsuspecting nature.

“Laertes's death and the Queen's are truly poetical justice, and very naturally brought about, although I do not conceive it so easy to change rapiers in a scuffle without knowing it at the time. The death of the Queen is particularly according to the strictest rules of poetical justice; for she loses her life by the villainy of the very person, who had been the cause of all her crimes.

“Since the poet deferred so long the usurper's death, we must own that he has very naturally effected it, and still added fresh crimes to those the murderer had already committed.

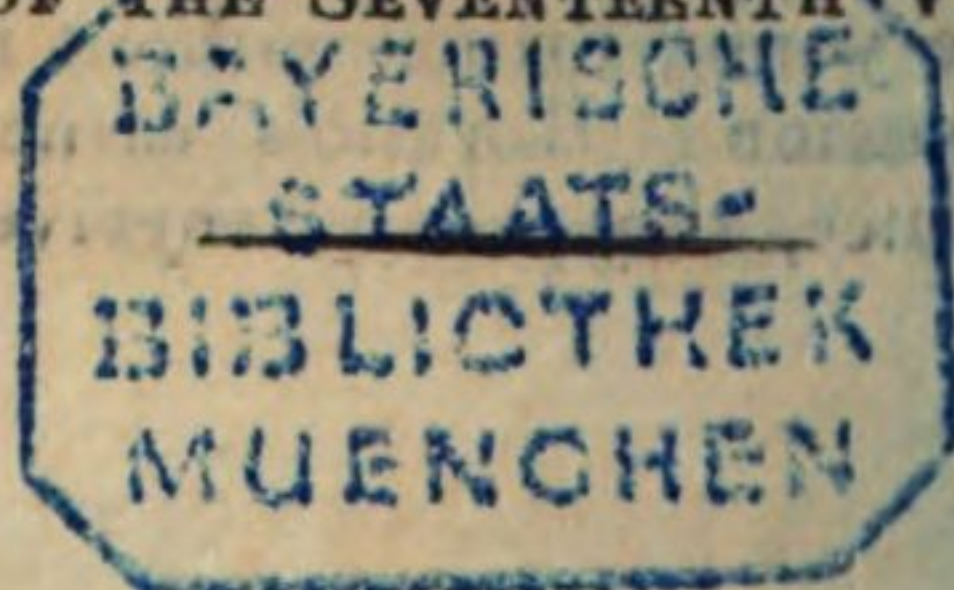
“Upon Laertes's repentance for contriving the death of Hamlet, one cannot but feel some sentiments of pity for him; but who can see or read the death of the young Prince without melting into tears and compassion? Horatio's earnest desire to die with the Prince, thus not to survive his friend,

gives a stronger idea of his friendship for Hamlet in the few lines on that occasion, than many actions or expressions could possibly have done. And Hamlet's begging him *to draw his breath in this harsh world* a little longer, to clear his reputation, and manifest his innocence, is very suitable to his virtuous character, and the honest regard that all men should have not to be misrepresented to posterity; that they may not set a bad example, when in reality they have set a good one: which is the only motive that can, in reason, recommend the love of fame and glory.

"Horatio's desire of having the bodies carried to a stage, &c. is very well imagined, and was the best way of satisfying the request of his deceased friend: and he acts in this, and in all points, suitably to the manly honest character, under which he is drawn throughout the piece. Besides, it gives a sort of content to the audience, that though their favourite (which must be Hamlet) did not escape with life, yet the greatest amends will be made him, which can be in this world, viz. justice done to his memory.

"Fortinbras comes in very naturally at the close of the play, and lays a very just claim to the throne of Denmark, as he had the dying voice of the Prince. He in a few words gives a noble character of Hamlet, and serves to carry off the deceased hero from the stage with the honours due to his birth and merit." MALONE.

END OF THE SEVENTEENTH VOLUME.



Shakespeare, William,

The Plays of William Shakspeare

Bd.: 17. Hamlet, prince of Denmark. - 376 S.

London 1826

P.o.angl. 361 c-16/17

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10749491-4